Housing Management in Scotland

Scottish Development Department

Scottish Housing Advisory Committee

REPORT OF
THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON HOUSING MANAGEMENT

EDINBURGH - HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE - 1967

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Prefatory Note

The following Report of a Sub-Committee of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee, submitted to the Secretary of State by the Committee, is published in order that it may be made available to all who are interested. The recommendations in the Report will he considered in the light of any comments from local authorities and other interested hodies and persons. In the meantime the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee and the Secretary of State should not be regarded as in any way committed to accepting them.

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Housing Management in Scotland

Introduction

Terms of Reference

1. Following a recommendation by the Scottisb Housing Advisory Committee on 14th October 1965, we were appointed by tbe Secretary of State with the following remit:

> "To consider the general question of the management of houses provided by local authorities and to advise on what further guidance sbould be given on the subject."

It appeared to us that this remit was drafted in very wide terms which would permit us to consider any aspects of management which seemed appropriate. We bad to consider at the same time the problems which arise in the city of Glasgow, where the Corporation owns over 140,000 houses, and those of the smallest local authorities wbose houses barely run into double figures.

2. We desire to place on record our appreciation of the action of the Secretary of State in re-constituting the Scottisb Housing Advisory Committee after a long period of inactivity; we also consider that the subject of bousing management which we were asked to consider is an important one and tbat an investigation of this kind was badly needed.

Method of Enquiry

3. In approaching tbe task given to us, our first objective was to find out precisely what Scottish local authorities were doing and for this purpose we addressed a questionnaire to the 88 local authorities covered by the annual Rating Review published by the Scottish Branch of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants. This includes all cities, counties and large burghs and those small burgbs baving a population of 9,000 or over. Of these authorities, no less than 85 returned completed questionnaires. For purposes of comparison we also sent the same questionnaire to the three established Scottisb New Towns and to the Scottisb Special Housing Association. Subsequently we addressed further written enquiries on particular points of interest arising out of the questionnaires to some authorities and received additional explanations of their policies. We then visited a number of local authorities and New Town Development Corporations in both Scotland and England so as to obtain first-band evidence of the way tbeir policies are carried out.

4. In addition to these enquiries and visits we sought the views of various professional and other organisations by direct invitation and by means of an advertisement in the daily press. We received a considerable volume of written submissions and heard oral evidence from several of the organisations concerned. A full list of all the authorities and organisations giving evidence will be found in Appendix A.

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Acknowledgment

5. We wish to acknowledge our appreciation of the efficient services rendered hy our Secretary Mr M. H. Orde, O.B.E., and by Mr J. Thompson.

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who assisted us in our enquiry. Without the helpful co-operation of all those involved, we should not have been ahle to complete our work.

(*Signed*) Edward Clark
(*Chairman*)
Charles C. Brownlie
Walter Cameron
T. Donnelly
Norman Dunhill
Malcolm A. Smith
Grace Thorburn

M. H. Orde (*Secretary*)
J. Thompson (*Assistant Secretary*)

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CHAPTER 1

Housing Management in Scotland

Previous Reports

6. Much has been written about housing management in the past and there is no dearth of expert advice as to how local authorities should deal with the various aspects of this task. In 1946 the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee published a report on "Housing Management in Scotland"[1] and the general topic of housing management has also been the subject of various books and reports, both official and unofficial, published in England[2]. We therefore approached our enquiry on the basis of an examination of the extent to which standards of good management are being applied today by local authorities in Scotland.

General Impression

7. We have no hesitation in saying at the outset that we were gravely disappointed at what we found. We formed the impression that, with some honourable exceptions, local authorities have tended to concentrate their attention so much on the need to build new houses in large numbers in order to deal with the vast problems of unfitness, of overcrowding and of shortages, that they have tended to overlook the fact that the end product of their efforts is not merely another unit to be added to the year's statistics, but a home for a family which will continue to exist, providing a vitally needed social service, over an indefinite period. It should indeed continue to do this long after the time, if that time ever comes, when all the basic problems which caused the houses to be built in the first place have been solved and forgotten. But we can see all too clearly the difficulties which are likely to arise which could prevent this aim from being successfully achieved and which can be attributed directly to the present inadequate management policy and methods.

8. The result of this attitude of local authorities is that *they have generally failed to accord to management the importance and priority among their affairs which, in our opinion, it requires if a satisfactory service is to be provided, commensurate with the important part it plays in the lives of the people living in the houses. We regard this attitude as nothing less than a failure by most Scottish local authorities to appreciate their proper responsibilities.*

9. In one way this attitude is surprising in view of the important part housing plays in the day to day affairs of all large local authorities. Management problems take up a great deal of council and committee time and it is natural that they should do so. Probably at least 80 per cent of approaches made to councillors are concerned with housing difficulties. We would expect that, if management services were improved on the lines which we recommend, this burden on councillors would be largely relieved.

1 *Housing Management in Scotland.* Report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee (Cmd. 6901). H.M.S.O. 1946.

2 Specific references to published sources of information are incorporated in the text of the report. A list of the main publications which we have consulted is given at Appendix B.

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Need for Review

10. We believe that the present time is a good one for local authorities to take stock of the position and to consider afresh the way in which their management services should be developed in order to fulfil their proper functions in the future and to make up their minds as to precisely what these proper functions are. Since the war some 600,000 new houses have been built in Scotland, of which approximately 420,000 have been provided by local authorities, almost exclusively for letting. The houses owned by local authorities now total over 660,000 and represent nearly 40 per cent of all houses in Scotland. The percentage of the total number of houses owned by the local authority varies, of course, in different areas, but in Airdrie it is 75% [3] and other urban areas, though not burghs, contain even higher proportions; for example in Blantyre, in the county of Lanark, it is no less than 83%.[4] The capital value of these houses must be well over £1,000m. and the annual cost to be met from local authority revenue in 1965-66 totalled no less than £70m.

11. Although in some areas of highly concentrated population the end of the problems of slum clearance and overcrowding are not yet in sight and a large programme of new house building will continue for many years to come, there are other places where immediate priority needs have largely been met and where the rate of new building is now slowing down. But whatever the position, the sheer numbers of houses owned by the authorities should make them appreciate that their housing problem of the future concerns the continuing good management of this heritage of valuable property so as to serve the best interests of the authorities themselves and of the tenants of the houses. Already in many areas the position has been reached where, despite the length of the official waiting list, the needs are no longer so pressing that people will accept any house that is offered; they are becoming increasingly particular about the sort of house they will accept and the area in which they are willing to live. The problem is no longer simply to build houses, but to have available a wide variety of house types and utilise them in the best possible manner so as to achieve and maintain the greatest possible satisfaction of the various housing needs.

12. As we explain in the following chapters, we have found a great variety of approach among Scottish local authorities. The ways their management services have developed have more often been due to historical accident than to any clear plan. We would hope that each local authority, no matter what the scale of their interest in housing, would take this report as a yardstick against which to examine their current methods and if necessary draw up a new plan to give effect to the various points on which we make recommendations.

Example from England

13. The lack of priority accorded by most Scottish local authorities to their housing departments (even where such a separate department exists, which is not by any means general) was brought home to us most forcibly after visiting a number of local authorities in England where in status, staffing and general priority the department is treated as one of the most important in the authority. There are of course many matters in the local government field in which conditions in Scotland differ from those generally prevalent in England and which therefore require to be approached in a different way. We believe that housing management is not one of these matters. We would not, of course, presume to generalise on the basis of limited evidence and the few visits we had time to make. Nevertheless, we wish to place on record that we have seen some local authority housing departments in England which have achieved a more comprehensive system of management than is to be found anywhere in Scotland. We consider, therefore, that Scottish

3 As at May 1966. Source *Rating Review*, Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, Scottish Branch, 1967.

4 Information supplied by Lanark County Council.

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local authorities should not hesitate to learn from the practical experience which has been built up in this field south of the Border. This contrast is the more striking in that English local authorities, in proportion to the population of their areas, tend to own fewer houses than do authorities in Scotland.

Statutory Responsibility

14. Successive Acts of Parliament since the earliest years of Scottish housing legislation have placed in the hands of local authorities the responsibility for the management of the houses which they own[5]. The precise organisation which authorities adopt in order to discharge this responsibility must necessarily vary. What is of the first importance is that every local authority member should recognise that he shares this responsibility for the efficient management of the houses which the authority already own, as well as for building new houses. *We recommend that all local authorities should consider afresh the form of organisation which is best suited to exercising these responsibilities.*

15. Although the statutory responsibility for housing management rests upon local authorities, we consider that the substantial central government share in housing finance, and the Secretary of State's concern for housing policy in Scotland, make it right that he should take a strong lead in advising local authorities regarding the best methods to adopt in carrying out this responsibility. In order that he may be in a position to carry out this task effectively, *we recommend that all local authorities should be asked to submit to him details of the arrangements which they have made for housing management.* If his consideration of this information and his advice to local authorities led to no general improvement in standards of management, it might become necessary for the Secretary of State to be given powers to require local authorities to revise their methods to conform with recommended standards.

Professional Advice to the Secretary of State

16. If the recommendation in the previous paragraph is accepted, it would be essential for the Secretary of State to have the benefit of expert professional advice on the subject. There was at one time a post of Adviser in Housing Management in the former Department of Health for Scotland[6]. *We recommend that this post should now be re-established in the Scottish Development Department. It should be graded at a level high enough to attract a fully qualified and experienced housing manager whose advice would be respected by members of his own profession and by local authorities large and small.*

5 The current provision is section 149 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1966.
6 See *Housing Management in Scotland,* H.M.S.O. 1946 Para. 3. The post was abolished in 1951.

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CHAPTER 2

Scope of Housing Management

17. Chapter 1 indicated our view that Scottisb local authorities generally bave failed to accord to housing management a proper measure of priority among their affairs. In the following chapters we are concerned mainly with tbe various tasks arising in the management of houses. and tbe way in which those tasks are carried out by officials under the control of the local authority and their Committees. Our purpose is two-fold: in the first place, to survey the tasks to be done and tbe way in which housing management departments need to be organised in order to carry them out effectively: in tbe second place, to draw attention to certain detailed aspects of management where we feel that some guidance on objectives and methods would be of value both to elected members and to officials.

18. We also consider in Cbapter 5 some important matters wbich, in the chronological order of events in tbe life of a bousing scbeme, arise before tbe houses are ready for occupation and management proper begins. These concern tbe planning of bousing schemes. Altbough in this report we have treated this as being outside the direct responsibility of the management department. we stress the importance of the contribution which experience of management should make at the planning stage.

19. The various tasks of management proper are as follows:—

(a) To prepare and revise from time to time a scbeme for allocating houses. To maintain a waiting list of applicants for bouses and within the framework of the scheme to allocate to each person to be reboused the house whicb is as far as possible most suited to his needs. To deal appropriately witb the special problems arising from the rebousing of people from redevelopment areas.

(b) To arrange transfers and exchanges of tenancies with the object as far as possible of meeting the needs of different tenants and ensuring tbat the available stock of bouses is utilised to the maximum possible advantage. This should include exchanges with people living outside the area of tbe authority.

(c) To fix rents and prepare a rent rebate scheme. To collect the rents for the houses, deal with the recovery of arrears, and administer tbe rent rebate scheme.

(d) To maintain the houses in a good state of repair, in so far as this is tbe responsibility of the authority, and to ensure tbat the tenants comply with tbe conditions of tenancy. To initiate any action needed to bring older bouses up to modern standards. To take all possible measures to maintain the external appearance and amenity of bousing estates.

(e) To take all necessary steps to foster and maintain a good relationship with tenants, to assist tenants wbereever possible to deal with any problems arising out of their tenancy and to encourage good neighbourliness between tenants. As far as possible within the limitations of the duties of the authority, to foster and encourage a good social atmospbere and sense of community on bousing estates, including the encouragement of community activities and voluntary organisations.

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To endeavour to raise the social standard of housing areas which, through poor management in the past, have become socially unacceptahle.

Prevention

20. The methods by which these various, but inter-related functions can best be carried out are discussed in the following chapters. At this stage, we state a general principle which should underlie the approach to each aspect of the task: *that prevention is better than cure.* In all aspects of housing management, awkward prohlems constantly arise. Many of these can be prevented entirely or, where this is not possible, can be mitigated or dealt with more easily if the right approach has been adopted in the first instance. We shall endeavour to show some of the ways in which this principle can he applied to practical effect.

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CHAPTER 3

Systems of Housing Management

21. The 1946 report distinguished between two basic approaches by local authorities to the task of managing their houses. These were the functional system of management and the centralised system.

22. Stated briefly, the essence of the functional system was that the responsibility for the various functions of management were divided between different departments of the authority with, it was claimed, the advantage that each received the expert attention of specialists in that particular field. Thus rent collection would normally be the responsibility of the chamberlain's department, repairs that of the architect's, engineer's or burgh surveyor's department, and the actual allocation and letting of houses might be done by the town clerk's department though in some cases this also was dealt with by the burgh chamberlain's department.

23. By contrast, under the centralised system all these functions are made the responsibility of a single department. The 1946 report identified this with what has become known as the "Octavia Hill System". The essence of this system, which was introduced by Octavia Hill at the end of the 19th century and subsequently developed by the Society of Housing Managers, was that all aspects of the management of houses were entrusted to a woman housing manager who visited every house at regular intervals, principally to collect the rent but also to deal with all matters connected with the maintenance of the property and at the same time to get to know the tenants. It was claimed that the system by assisting tenants with their problems of all kinds and thereby encouraging a high standard of co-operation, fostered a good reciprocal working arrangement between them and the landlord authority. This method, which emphasised the social aspects of management and was at the time of its introduction entirely new in concept, was highly successful and has had a profound influence upon modern thought on housing management, regardless of the actual methods now employed [1].

24. A different view of centralised housing management was taken by the former Institute of Housing which, while stressing the need for efficient professionally qualified managers, held that management and welfare were separate functions to be dealt with by separate departments of the authority. The drawing together of these two ideas is well illustrated by the recent amalgamation of the Institute of Housing with the Society of Housing Managers to form the Institute of Housing Managers, which is now the single professional body in the housing management field. We refer further to the aims of the Institute in Chapter 13 and in Appendix E.

25. The 1946 report accepted that circumstances in different local authorities varied widely and might indicate different solutions to the problems of efficient management. It did not therefore make any firm recommendation in favour of either the functional or the centralised system although it did recommend that authorities which had not adopted the centralised system should re-examine their methods and consider whether the introduction of this form of organisation might prove beneficial in their areas.

1 *Housing Management*. The Society of Housing Managers, 1955.

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The position in Scotland

26. The replies to our questionnaire revealed that many authorities, including some of the largest, are still following the functional system of management. There are so many varieties in the methods followed and in the responsibilities allocated to the housing manager, where one has been appointed, that one cannot draw a clear dividing line between the two systems. We were however very disturbed to find two large authorities each owning well over 20,000 houses in which each different housing management function is dealt with by a different department. Although these authorities stressed to us that they were satisfied with their forms of organisation and believed that they worked both effectively and economically, *we concluded that the economies were more apparent than real and were satisfied that these authorities and their tenants would benefit from a change to a centralised organisation.*

27. At the other extreme from these large authorities are some quite small ones where there is not a separate housing department but where all management functions are efficiently carried out by the burgh chamberlain's or town clerk's department in a manner which comprises on a small scale all the best features of a centralised system. In between come the majority of authorities of medium size and above which have a housing manager, frequently head of his own department, but exercising responsibilities which are limited in various different ways. An idea of this may be gained from the replies to our questionnaire.

28. Replies received from all the larger local authorities in Scotland revealed the following situation:

RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOUSING MANAGERS

No. of houses owned by Local Authority	No. of authorities in group	Housing Manager employed	Housing Manager				
				Responsible for			
			Consulted about planning of new houses	Letting houses	Arranging transfers, exchanges	Rent collection	Ordering repairs
Under 2,000	33	7	6	—	1	4	4
2,001-5,000	25	18	9	10	13	13	8
5,001-10,000	15	12	8	7	6	6	5
10,001-20,000	6	6	2	6	5	5	3
Over 20,000	6	4	4	4	4	4	3
TOTAL	85	47	29	27	29	32	23

Diagrams illustrating two contrasting forms of organisation for housing management under centralised and functional systems are given in Appendix C.

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29. It is clear from these figures that there is a wide variety of opinion about what the functions of the housing manager should be. For example those authorities which do not make him responsible for rent collection point out in justification that rent is an important part of the revenue of the council for which the council's chief financial officer is responsible and he must therefore have the collection of rent under his direct control and carried out by his own department. Other authorities, on the other hand, find no difficulty in entrusting this task entirely to the housing department.

30. It is often claimed that these different approaches are required by the different circumstances prevailing in various local authorities. After visiting a number of authorities of different types and sizes in both Scotland and England it is our view that the requirements of good housing management are broadly the same everywhere. The differences in practice between local authorities are more often due to the way the management system has grown up over the years and in some cases to the personalities of the people who have helped the service to develop. We would suggest that, with a few special exceptions, the factors which do indicate different approaches to the problem can be reduced to two basic ones, i.e.:

(a) the number of houses to be managed, and

(b) the extent to which the houses are concentrated in a small area or scattered over a larger one.

Minor changes of emphasis may of course be required to deal with special local requirements. For example, there may be an exceptional concentration of particular types of tenants such as elderly persons, incoming industrial workers or people being rehoused from clearance areas. These however do not affect the basic principles.

31. We recognise that it would not be easy in any particular case for a local authority to make drastic changes in its organisation without allowing time for full consideration and preparation but *we nevertheless recommend most strongly that those authorities operating systems of management not in accordance with the advice given in this report should examine the position with great care and give serious consideration to the benefits which might accrue from a change in the system.*

32. In our view the one vital fact about housing management which must never be overlooked is that it is a service, and one which by being performed well or badly can profoundly affect people's lives and their attitude to the local authority. This attitude will never be the same as to a private landlord. The local authority has always to live down an image of red tape and bureaucracy, delight in petty and unnecessary restrictions, and readiness to interfere with people's private affairs and liberties at the smallest excuse[2].

33. The key to a good management system, then, is the way in which it deals with the central problem of the relationship between landlord and tenant. Rent collection may be effectively carried out, the houses may be kept freshly painted and in good repair, but, unless attention is also paid to the needs of the tenants in their homes so as to encourage them to co-operate with the authority, the management is not achieving its primary task and it is likely that the routine tasks mentioned above will be carried out less efficiently and economically than if they had been assisted by the full confidence and co-operation of the tenants. *We have come firmly to the opinion that, in order to achieve the objectives described above in the most effective and economical manner, there is no satisfactory alternative to the type of organisation which groups all the functions of housing management in a single department in the charge of a suitably qualified Chief Officer.*

34. The reasons which have led us to this view that all these matters should be grouped in a single department are many, but can be grouped for convenience into two main advantages, i.e., the advantage to the authority and the advantage to the tenant.

[2] *Public Ownership and Bureaucracy* by John Fleming, F.R.I.C.S., F.I.H.M., M.R.S.H. "Housing" Vol. II No. 4, November, 1966.

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The advantage to the Authority

35. However good may be the co-operation between different departments under a functional system of management, it is clear to us from our visits to local authorities working on that basis, that this is no substitute for a single centralised control. Properly carried out, the centralised system should lead to greater efficiency through the avoidance of duplication of effort and the better apportionment of priorities with a single objective always in view. Moreover many of the less obvious but, as we shall explain, extremely important aspects of management, especially to do with amenity, welfare and social development, cannot be dealt with effectively if the department does not handle all the other matters and cannot adjust them as required to fit particular pressing social needs.

The advantage to the tenant

36. Although difficult to measure, we believe that the advantage which can accrue to the authority from the goodwill of contented tenants is substantial. One of the immediate disadvantages of a functional organisation is that the tenant frequently experiences great difficulty in finding the right department to which he may turn when any problems or difficulties arise. For example, for interviews concerning such matters, all concerned with his tenancy, as an explanation of why he is in arrears with the rent, application for a rent rehate, request for repairs to the roof, or request for permission to put up a garden shed, he may be referred not merely to different officials hut in some cases to different offices in different parts of the town. However well the departments may co-operate, the officials who deal with requests of this kind are seldom in a position to take into account at the same time factors relating to all these different sorts of problems which may, nevertheless, he closely interlinked in the overall situation in which the tenant may find himself. We helieve therefore that it is most important that there should be a single point of contact hetween the tenant and the authority for all purposes connected with the tenancy of the house, and that the department which provides this contact should be in a position to deal with all aspects of the tenant's problems at one time and to balance them all up hefore coming to any decision in relation to any one of them.

Organisation and methods

37. Several of the local authorities with which we have discussed their housing management methods, have at one time or another made use of the techniques of organisation and method studies to assist them in determining the form of their housing management departments. Where such studies have been carried out by outside firms of consultants, we have heen disappointed to discover the extent to which these studies appear to have heen directed only to the narrow objective of securing economies in the conduct of the services already being carried out by the authorities. In no case that we investigated did it appear that the organisation and methods team had addressed itself first to the basic question of what service the authority should be providing and what would he the most efficient manner in which it could be carried out. We know of two O. & M. studies carried out hy the same firm of consultants on two neighbouring county council housing departments, in which the eventual recommendation favoured two diametrically opposed systems of management. *We would therefore strongly recommend that in any future case where a local authority considered commissioning such a study, the authority should make it clear in the remit given to the study team, that the first question to be answered should be to define the service that should be provided, and that the question of whether an efficient and economical management service would in practice cost more or less than the authority was currently paying should be secondary to the main problem of providing an efficient service to the public.*

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Criteria for establishment of a separate housing department

38. After considering the position in a variety of local authorities of different sizes we have formed the opinion that the minimum size of unit above which it is desirable to establish a separate centralised department, responsible exclusively for housing management, would be approximately 1,000 houses. In the rest of this report we refer to such a department as the housing department. This suggested minimum size cannot, however, be a hard and fast dividing line and where the houses are scattered some authorities owning slightly larger numbers of houses may find it necessary to work to a less developed system making use either of part-time officials or of part of the time of officers who would combine housing duties with other responsibilities. The most common example of this is in rural areas where houses are scattered in small groups. In such cases it is common for district sanitary inspectors to combine housing functions with their other duties. However as a general guide, particularly in towns, *we believe that* 1,000 *houses may be taken as a useful indication of what can form the minimum size of an economically organised separate department.*

Smaller authorities

39. There are however many local authorities which at present own fewer than 1,000 houses, but the principles of good management which, we have suggested, can best be served by establishing a properly run centralised department, are equally important in these cases. We recognise that there may not always be sufficient work to provide employment for full-time housing staff and that housing duties may have to be combined with others in whatever manner is most convenient in view of the way the houses are located. This may apply particularly in rural areas. *However we would strongly urge that such authorities should make a careful review of their practice and consider the possible advantages which they might derive from concentrating responsibility for all housing matters in a single Department.* Such a department, even if it had other duties to perform, should be able to reproduce on a small scale many of the practices which are recommended in this report.

40. For example some small burghs find it necessary to employ only a part-time burgh chamberlain, whereas a full-time officer with combined duties as burgh chamberlain and housing manager might be more ready than present officials to look on housing management as an important end in itself rather than as an extra unwanted chore to be passed on to someone else as quickly as possible.

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CHAPTER 4

A Pattern for the Future?

41. We have observed that some authorities in England bave developed a form of organisation which groups together all tbeir functions relating to bousing — both management of existing houses and the planning and construction of new houses — in one department under a single chief officer wbo may be given tbe title of Director of Housing. When dealing with new bouse construction, such a department migbt employ its own architects and building labour, but would not necessarily do so; in either case, the Director of Housing would be responsible to his authority for carrying out the housing programme and for the preparation of detailed briefs for tbe provision of new bouses. An organisation of this kind would clearly facilitate co-ordination between all related aspects of housing and ensure that experience gained from the management of earlier estates was properly taken into account when planning and building new houses.

42. We feel, however, that tbe spbere of responsibility of a chief officer in this position would be extremely wide and that it would be difficult at the present time to recruit any one individual with the necessary qualifications to carry out sucb a task. Where this system has evolved in England it has come about as a response to a clearly felt need for a highly centralised organisation to meet actual pressing problems. We do not suggest tbat sucb a pattern should be attempted as yet in Scotland when tbe primary and pressing need is for the development of strong and effective departments to deal witb management. When that stage has been reached it may become possible to build further on an established organisation if a genuine need is felt which can best be met in this way and we recognise that, particularly in very large authorities, a development of this kind may eventually become desirable. *We recommend that it should be kept in view as a possible answer to the large scale problems which may arise in the future.*

43. When considering possible future developments we must now turn briefly to the question of management in a very large autbority owning large numbers of bouses. In Chapter 3 we recorded some comments on the problems of small authorities and on the minimum number of houses which would justify setting up a centralised department responsible exclusively for bousing management. The question must also be posed as to whether there is similarly a maximum size above which it would not be desirable for one department to manage all the bouses concerned.

44. Some authorities owning a large number of bouses find it desirable to delegate management functions to a number of sub-offices, eacb one normally serving a specified part of their area. It is difficult to generalise about tbe number of houses required before this type of organisation becomes necessary; it should perbaps be considered when the number rises above 10,000 and will almost certainly be needed for anything significantly above 20,000. Except when all the houses are concentrated in a relatively small area, *we consider that this form of organisation is most desirable in order to preserve close contact with the tenants and easy access to the department for discussion of their problems.* The officers in charge of these district offices sbould be given tbe maximum possible delegated powers to deal with all aspects of the management of the houses within their districts,

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within policies laid down by the authority. Subject to the degree of dispersal of tbe houses in the areas concerned, satisfactory subordinate units of management migbt be based on from 5.000 to 10.000 houses in each one. Certain matters such as the maintenance of the waiting list should be dealt with centrally since it is important to preserve the maximum possible flexibility in the area over which houses may be allocated and the largest possible pool of accommodation to meet the overall needs of the area, but district managers should have as much discretion as possible to suit tenants needs for different types of houses and to fit them into surroundings and among neighbours wbere they will be most at home and able to settle down satisfactorily.

45. There has recently been a lot of public discussion of tbe possibility tbat the wbole structure of Scottish local government might be altered by the creation of a small number of large regional authorities whose functions might include housing. These regional authorities would exercise jurisdiction in certain matters throughout tbeir region, concurrently with smaller "lower tier" local authorities in the same area. We bave, of course, no information about any recommendation whicb may eventually he made by the Royal Commission on Local Government in Scotland, but we felt that it would be advisable for us to give some thought to the position of bousing management if a system of tbe type suggested were eventually to be introduced in Scotland.

46. We therefore considered whether there was any indication for an overall maximum size for an authority responsible for housing management. Glasgow Corporation already own some 140,000 houses and this number is growing rapidly. A future Clydeside regional authority might find themselves owners of two or three times that number. To concentrate in a single authority powers over such a wide area might well have advantages from the point of view of the planning and building of houses, but would it be satisfactory from the managerial point of view? Might not the authority thereby become so remote from the individual tenant that the interests of the latter would be lost in a remote machine out of toucb with the realities of tbe daily lives of the people living in the houses?

47. It is clear that this situation would have its dangers and that there could be a risk of a lack of flexibility which would operate against the interests of the tenants. We believe that the solution lies in the establishment of district housing offices, each preferably managing not more than 10,000 bouses and under a qualified and experienced manager who should be given the maximum possible delegated authority together witb financial responsibility for management costs in his district. We understand tbat delegation of this kind works effectively over the large area of the Greater London Council. *The advantages of a uniform management policy over a large area, particularly in producing a flexible attitude to such matters as allocations, transfers and exchanges, far outweigh the possible advantages of leaving the management of houses to a lower-tier authority.*

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CHAPTER 5

Planning of Housing Estates

48. If new housing estates are to give satisfactory service for the full period for which they are expected to last, and if there is to be any hope that at the end of that period they will still be regarded by the tenants and the general public as desirable homes, it is imperative that the closest attention should be paid at the planning stage to past experience of existing houses.

49. In this report we are dealing with housing departments which are directly responsible for management but not for the construction of new houses. We consider, however, that there are two ways in which it is important that the housing department should make its contribution to the authority's development work. First, it should undertake research, both consumer research among tenants, in order to obtain information about their preferences, and research into maintenance costs of different types of construction. Second, it should feed back the results of this research, and the experience of the department in carrying out its day to day work, to those concerned with construction and planning.

50. Our impression from the discussions we have held with various local authorities which we visited, is that the situation in this respect in Scotland is far from satisfactory. One result of the general lack of recognition and status accorded to housing management in Scotland is that, although the housing manager (where one is appointed) is usually consulted about the numbers and sizes of new houses required, he is often not treated as a key member of the team responsible for planning housing estates. *In our view, he should be in continuous close consultation with the architect, planning officer and engineer about the plans for new estates, and his advice should be sought by the housing committee on the matters referred to in this Chapter.* We stress that it must be continuous consultation: a single opportunity to comment on plans which may later be changed is quite inadequate.

Layout

51. There are many aspects of the layout of estates in which the management interest is important, particularly from the points of view of the convenience of tenants and of ease and economy of maintenance. Among other matters these would include, for example:—

(a) The way in which dwellings of different sizes, suitable for particular categories of tenants (for example, old people or families with children) are sited, and intermingled with each other and with other social facilities. (For example past housing schemes consisting only of large houses have resulted in a particular type of family being concentrated in one area resulting in an unbalanced community).

(b) The location and adequacy of ancillary amenities such as children's playgrounds, community centres or shops.

(c) The number and sizes of private gardens, where these are provided. Experience shows that tenants do not want large gardens, and many prefer not to have any.

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(d) The position of roads and footpaths in relation to buildings. For example, too great a distance between entrance doors and the roadway is sometimes the result of an economical road pattern but can lead to difficulties over removal of furniture and collection of refuse. The desirability, which we acknowledge, of such features as pedestrian/vehicle segregation needs to be considered in relation to practical points such as these. Footpaths should be sited so as to lead by the most direct route or else people will cut off corners and cause damage to grassed areas; on the other hand, footpaths should not pass close to the windows of a ground floor flat.

(e) The positioning of such facilities as car parking spaces and clothes drying areas are important, since if they are inconvenient to the tenant they may not be properly used as intended.

(f) The design of passageways, especially if they are rarely used or have ill-lit corners, can cause management difficulties. The walls should be finished with a surface which is resistant to marking and vandalism.

(g) The layout of forecourts and landscaped areas may, or may not make them convenient and easy to maintain.

House Design

52. As in layout, so also in the design and equipment of houses and flats, there are many matters on which ease of maintenance and satisfaction for the tenants should be considered. Much inconvenience could be avoided by ensuring that equipment and fittings which had proved unsatisfactory should not be repeated in subsequent developments. Examples of such matters include:—

(a) Particular forms of space heating equipment.

(b) Facilities for clothes drying where these have to be incorporated in the building.

(c) The position, size and number of lifts, their design (for example, whether vulnerable to mis-use by hooligans) and maintenance aspects.

(d) Arrangements for refuse disposal.

(e) The layout of rooms, including the position of the doors and convenience for arranging furniture.

(f) Special design requirements in the case of houses for the elderly and the disabled.

(g) Specification of particular types of window, floor coverings and other fittings.

53. Although a certain type of house or certain materials or design features which it incorporates, may be attractive on account of low capital cost, the cost of maintenance may be correspondingly higher. If so, the authority should be made fully aware of the position before reaching their decision.

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CHAPTER 6

House Letting

54. We have read with interest the report of the sub-committee of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee which has been making a study of local authority allocation schemes[1]. Knowing that this sub-committee was carrying out a separate enquiry into this subject we have refrained from extending our own enquiries into the field of allocations policy, although we have inevitably encountered many references to it. Allocating houses is essentially a function of housing management. The housing manager's advice should be paramount when the authority's allocation policy is being formulated or changed. As the custodian of the waiting list, he is in the best position to advise on how the allocation scheme needs to be devised in order to provide the best and fairest balance between the needs of different categories of applicants. He should of course keep the waiting list regularly checked and revised so as to ensure that it truly reflects the housing needs of the area of the authority.

55. We consider that the allocation of houses in accordance with the policy laid down by the Council should be delegated to the housing manager, and *we support the recommendation in the report on allocating council houses that this function should be so delegated and that full details of the allocation scheme should be published and made available to all applicants.* But the housing manager should refer any cases of special difficulty, where a departure from the normal rules seems justified, to the appropriate committee for a decision. Only in this way can justice be seen to be done to all applicants, while maintaining a sufficient measure of flexibility to be able to deal with the genuine hard cases which are bound to occur however well the rules are prepared.

56. We have observed from our visits and enquiries that local authorities in rural areas have a tendency to entrust greater responsibility for allocation to individual councillors, on the grounds that their local knowledge is especially valuable. The fact that the numbers of houses involved in the area of each councillor is likely to be much smaller than in a densely populated urban area may also have something to do with this policy which would be impracticable in most large burghs. Nevertheless we believe that even in rural areas this view is mistaken. Naturally the housing manager will be glad of any information about the circumstances of an applicant which the councillor may be able to give him, but until the stage is reached when there is a shortage of applicants rather than of houses, *rural areas no less than urban will benefit from a standard and publicly understood letting policy.* It is housing manager's business to inform himself fully of the circumstances of each applicant, preferably through his own staff, but if necessary in scattered rural areas through other officials such as the District Sanitary Inspector or District Clerk. He is then fully in a position to deal with all applications.

57. Councillors will, of course, always receive appeals and complaints from their constituents and have a right to do their best to help them where possible. The housing department should have nothing to hide and should always try to keep a harmonious and

1 *Allocating Council Houses.* Report by a sub-committee of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee, H.M.S.O. 1967.

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co-operative relationship with the councillors as this will be of greatest benefit to both and in return should receive the councillors' support when it has acted correctly and in accordance with approved policy.

Assessment of Need

58. Most local authorities require an applicant to complete an application form when he first applies for a house giving full details of his family circumstances and frequently also of his means. In some authorities this represents the sum total of what is known of the applicant except for any additional information which he may volunteer. To rely solely on a written application in this way is, however, totally inadequate. Good management requires a personal knowledge of every prospective tenant, his circumstances and his needs as assessed by an experienced housing officer. *To gain this satisfactorily requires a visit to the applicant in his own home.* An interview in an office is seldom an adequate substitute.

59. It will not usually be necessary for this visit to be carried out immediately the application is lodged. Particulars on the form may show clearly that the applicant has no prospects of a house for a long time. But well before the time when his name might be coming up for consideration, a visit should be arranged.

60. The visit will have three main objects. First, to check the accuracy of the information on the application form and correct it if necessary (it may well be out of date); second to make an assessment of the applicant's general background and suitability as a tenant (this can usually be judged fairly accurately from a quick inspection of his present accommodation), and third from the information gained by the first and second processes, to assess the type of house which will be most suitable for his needs.

61. The first part of this task is relatively simple, but the second and third require tact, training and experience. The need for the second part of the exercise implies no reflection on applicants for council houses either individually or in general. The fact is that people do come from widely differing backgrounds and would react differently to various types of new housing accommodation, both on account of its type and its situation. Many future difficulties can be avoided and the tenants themselves can be helped to settle down more happily if the right allowance for these factors is made at the beginning when a house is being chosen for them.

62. A local authority frequently have at their disposal houses of varying age, quality, situation, type, level of rent and so on. Apart from the obvious need to give a person a house of the right size for the numbers in his family, there are many other factors to be considered. A brief discussion with the applicant will often make clear the level of rent which the family can afford and an area where they would be happy and fit in with their new neighbours, or by contrast other areas where the reverse situation would be more probable. Sometimes an important factor hitherto undisclosed may be discovered, for example one member of the family may be disabled, unable to climb stairs or even requiring special fittings or equipment in the new house (this matter is discussed further in Chapter 11).

63. *To summarise, visitation of every applicant in his present home is an essential first step in the allocation of houses. The report of this visit will enable the housing department to choose the house most appropriate for the applicant's individual needs.* Success in doing this is an important example of the precept to which we referred earlier, namely that prevention is better than cure. Many of the difficulties which tenants may encounter later could have been avoided if they had been given a more suitable house in the first instance.

Subsequent Moves

64. No matter how carefully these principles are applied, wrong allocations will occasionally be made. In any case circumstances change. What was the right house for a particular

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tenant may cease to be so and for a great variety of reasons he may wish to move. *When this is due to genuine need, it is in the interests of the local authority as well as of the tenant that he should be allowed to do so if at all possible.* The principal ways in which such moves are effected are hy transfers and exchanges.

Transfers

65. A transfer consists of rehousing an existing tenant in a more suitable house when a definite need arises. The hasic policy on transfers must he laid down hy the authority and he linked with their general policy on allocations. Circumstances may vary; for example if large numbers of applicants seek to move to a particularly desirable new residential area, the authority may decide to give priority to existing council tenants or, where there is a particularly pressing outside need which has to he met, the authority may decide that tenants who are already adequately housed should have to wait. Within the framework of this policy, however, the housing department should be given discretion to arrange transfers, whenever circumstances permit, on the principle of suiting the tenant to the hest house for his individual needs. Other considerations apart, when houses become availahle for allocation, the department should consider the needs of people on the transfer list alongside those of new applicants, hearing in mind the possihility of satisfying both hy arranging a double move.

66. Sometimes in order to find a suitahle house for an applicant who has a special need for a house of a particular type, it is necessary to ask someone else to move in order to vacate a particular house. This practice commonly known as "decanting", should only be resorted to where an urgent need can he met in no other way and where the tenant who is asked to move will in addition he given a house which is in practice either more desirable or more suited to his own needs. It may, for example, he appropriate where an elderly couple whose children have departed are under-occupying a large house. We would, however, once again support the view of the Allocations Suh-Committee that this process should not he applied compulsorily, particularly in the case of old people who may not wish to leave the home in which they have lived for many years. Reasonahle persuasion can he applied, and if the authority is in a position to offer accommodation specially designed and suitahle for elderly couples the attraction of this may often achieve the desired result.

Exchanges

67. The possihility of an exchange arises when the needs of two tenants correspond, so that each would he hetter suited hy the house at present occupied by the other. Often they will agree this hetween themselves hefore approaching the housing department. Provided the latter is satisfied that the exchanged houses would in fact be suitahle for each party, there would seem to be no logical reason why permission should not be given and the majority of local authorities do indeed permit this in a great many cases. Yet it is surprising how some authorities seem to place obstacles in the way of tenants desiring exchanges. We would like to see the housing department given full authority to arrange exchanges, not only between tenants of the authority, but also with tenants of other authorities and, subject to appropriate safeguards in the interests of the authority, with occupiers of privately owned property. *We welcome the establishment of a Central Exchange Bureau for Scottish local authorities, and would support the recommendation of the Allocations Sub-Committee that it should be allowed wider scope and greater flexibility in arranging exchanges*[2]. Exchanges involving three or more people also hecome possible. Where new house building slows down so that relets form a higher proportion of the houses availahle for allocation, the need for exchanges grows. Among other steps

2 *Allocating Council Houses*, para 65.

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to encourage them *we recommend that local authorities should display lists of people seeking exchanges*. We would repeat that exchanges can only advance the primary aim of having satisfied tenants in all houses.

Sub-letting

68. Before leaving the subject of letting, we would mention briefly the question of sub-letting of council houses. Local authorities are required by statute to insist on each case of sub-letting being made subject to their consent[3]. Evasion undoubtedly occurs, but we see no reason to differ from the advice given in the 1946 Report[4] concerning the dangers which may arise from failure to keep sub-letting under control. There will be many cases where permission can rightly be given and an authority which insists in general on the strict observance of the conditions of tenancy should have no difficulty in controlling this practice.

Conclusion

69. To summarise, the functions of the housing department over house letting is to receive applications, maintain the waiting list correctly and review it regularly to keep it up-to-date. It should allocate houses to applicants in accordance with the authority's approved and published scheme, but with full discretion to choose the particular house which is most suitable for each person to be housed. This it should decide after the applicant has been visited in his own home. Finally, it should do everything possible by arranging transfers and exchanges to ensure that the available stock of houses is used to the best possible advantage.

3 Housing (Scotland) Act 1966, section 151(6).
4 Para. 119.

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CHAPTER 7

Rent Collection

70. Legally it is the duty of the tenant to pay his rent regularly and to ensure that it reaches his landlord. The latter is under no obligation to make special arrangements to collect it from the tenant, or even to send him reminders when it is due. But a local authority which rested content with its legal rights in this respect would soon find itself in trouble, and it is an essential part of good management to make satisfactory arrangements for the collection of rents. Here, as in other branches of housing management, it is much easier, as well as more satisfactory, for the authority to prevent trouble arising by good organisation than to try to cure it after it has arisen.

71. There are many different ways of collecting rent and each has its supporters. We have seen a number of them in operation in different local authorities and have received a number of submissions setting out various views. We note that there is no clear consensus of opinion as to which is the best system and that the Institute of Housing Managers in its evidence refrained from giving any firm recommendation in favour of one method or another. Some local authorities regard rent collection, being an important financial matter, as being one which must be made the direct responsibility of the finance department of the authority and not of the housing department, and this view was supported in a submission from the Scottish Branch of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants. We shall return to this point in a later paragraph.

Systems

72. The various different methods of collecting rent which have been brought to our attention are as follows:

(a) Door-to-door collection by a rent collector who is responsible for this and for nothing else (this may or may not include collection of arrears).

(b) Door-to-door collection by a collector who is primarily a receiver of cash but who also will take note of any requests for repairs or other tenancy requirements which may be given to him and will pass them on to the appropriate official.

(c) Door-to-door collection by a trained housing assistant who is responsible not only for the collection of rent, but also for receiving requests for repairs and for ordering the repairs to be carried out; for dealing with requests for such matters as permission to erect garden sheds, or other matters arising under the conditions of tenancy; for dealing with general minor complaints and local disputes with neighbours and for the more simple of the "welfare" matters which are liable to arise in connection with cases of non-payment of rent.

(d) Office collection in one central office for the whole area of the authority.

(e) Office collection in a number of district or sub-offices which may be open either full time or part time.

(f) Collection by banker's order, by post or by other special arrangements.

73. Methods (a) or (b) are those usually followed where collection is the responsibility of

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the finance department. On the other hand, where door-to-door collection is practised by a centralised housing department, method (c) is the one more usually employed. There are variations of this method according to the degree of training and experience of the rent collectors or housing assistants employed on the work. The original Octavia Hill system, sometimes referred to as the "intensive" door-to-door system, is really only a variation of this method hut employing a housing assistant who is fully responsible for all the matters mentioned under (c) and also for all tenants' welfare work. In present-day conditions, with the growth of the services provided by welfare authorities, such a fully "intensive" system is required only in very exceptional circumstances and the responsibilities set out under (c) are normally sufficient.

74. If office collection is preferred the choice between (d) and (e) depends mainly on the number of houses owned by the authority and the extent to which they are concentrated or dispersed over large areas. Some large hurghs have found the single central office method satisfactory, but where they own more than, perhaps, 20,000 houses they may find it preferable to have a numher of sub-offices situated conveniently to the housing estates in different parts of the town. Counties with large rural areas and houses dispersed in small numhers sometimes make use of district council offices as sub-offices for rent collection, but more often they make arrangements for door-to-door collection by travelling rent collectors or, in a few remote areas, rely on payment by post.

75. Many authorities in practice work on a combination of these methods and in almost every authority there are special cases which need to he dealt with differently from the rest. It is therefore desirahle to consider what are the advantages of the various methods employed.

76. The primary objective of any system must be to collect the maximum possible percentage of the rent due as economically as possible. The main arguments in favour of door-to-door collection are that it is preferred by tenants and provides a greater certainty of regular payment with immediate pressure heing applied when any tenant falls into arrears. Office collection, on the other hand, is quicker and can be operated with fewer staff: provided the office is conveniently situated near a main shopping centre it should cause little or no inconvenience to tenants.

77. Clearly a system which is cheaper to operate hut allows a much greater accumulation of arrears is no true economy. On the other hand it should not he necessary to operate an expensive system for all the Council's tenants, of whom 90 per cent would probably pay their rent regularly and without falling into arrears, regardless of the system employed. The problem therefore reduces itself to the best means of dealing with the 10 per cent who need closer attention, and the question of whether or not they should be dealt with differently from the others. Many authorities have adopted the central office system hecause it is cheaper to operate and allows staff to he employed more intensively, but also continue to operate a limited door-to-door collection system confined to those few tenants whose record of payment shows them to he in need of regular visits and reminding.

78. This then, is an outline of the various systems in use. We now make two positive recommendations. *Although we fully appreciate the overall responsibility of the chief financial officer of the authority to account for all revenue, we believe that this is, and has in practice been found by many authorities to be, fully compatible with giving the actual responsibility for collection of rents to the housing department. We believe that this arrangement better serves the principle that all matters affecting the tenancy of a house should be concentrated in the hands of the housing department,* thus reducing to a minimum the different officials and offices which the tenant has to contact on matters affecting his housing. It may well be true, as is often claimed, that if freed from other responsibilities a rent collector could collect more rents in a day, but the result is likely to be, either that other staff have to he employed for the other matters so that, particularly in the case of door-to-door collection, there may he no economy but even a duplication of effort, or alternatively (as we observed to he the case in some authorities which we visited) the other matters were plainly neglected, to the detriment of good management generally.

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79. For example we are convinced that there is no substitute for a regular visit to all property for the purpose of keeping a general eye on standards of maintenance of houses and gardens, on the general amenity of the area, including cleanliness, and on the development of undesirable characteristics which may indicate the need for some new action to be taken by the authority. We shall have more to say on these matters in Chapters 9 and 11.

Flexibility

80. The second point on which we wish to make a firm recommendation is that, whatever method is adopted, it should be devised so as to be as convenient as possible to the tenant. Wherever possible it should allow him some choice as to the timing and method of payment. For example, we heard of one system in operation in one of the Scottish cities by which each tenant has not only a specified place where he must pay his rent, but also a specified day which is so rigidly fixed that rent will not be accepted from him even if offered in advance of his normal day for payment. Most authorities find no difficulty in allowing much more flexibility than this. When payment is to be made to a sub-office this may be open to receive money only on certain days of the month. While we appreciate that it may be uneconomic to operate sub-offices in any other way, there should always be an alternative open to the tenant. *We recommend that all authorities which operate the system of part-time sub-offices should consider carefully whether their whole management arrangements might be more effectively operated by turning these sub-offices into full-time district offices of the housing department, manned by staff having delegated responsibility for all housing management matters within their district* on the lines outlined in Chapter 4. In such cases there should be no difficulty in keeping the offices open daily so that payments could be accepted at any time they were offered.

81. Similarly, where a door-to-door system is used, but it does not suit the convenience of certain tenants, possibly because there is no-one regularly at home when the collector calls, it should always be possible for them to make other arrangements, either to pay at the office or by banker's order or by post as may be most convenient.

Frequency of Collection

82. At one time weekly door-to-door collections were the almost universal practice. More recently, along with a tendency to review methods of collection, there has been a trend towards fortnightly or in some cases monthly collection. This has been done largely for reasons of economy and some authorities have found the results entirely satisfactory. Our impression is that office collection at monthly intervals is more widely practised among Scottish local authorities than in England; one local survey carried out in England showed clearly that in that particular area, as door-to-door collection gave way to office collection, and as weekly gave way to fortnightly or monthly collection, so the rate of regular arrears went up. We would therefore suggest that *changes on either of these lines should be made only with great caution.* On the principle of catering in the first instance for the 90 per cent of good payers, a less close system might well be adopted provided tight control was retained in respect of the minority of weaker citizens who might not find it easy to conform to a system which, from their point of view, made it more difficult to be certain of paying the right amount at the right time.

Quality of Staff

83. We now turn to some general points which we have observed in connection with rent collection. The first concerns the great importance of having the best possible people employed in the collection of rent. We stress the great difference which can result from having individual collectors (particularly in the case of door-to-door collection) of the

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highest personal ahility. *It is a cardinal point that a door-to-door collector should be responsible for arrears in his own area of collection.* The effectiveness with which he deals with this responsihility and is ahle to prevent a serious situation arising, is to a great extent a matter of personality. In particular he must he tactful hut must he ahle to he firm when necessary. This is another indication in favour of the system described in paragraph 72 (c), which gives the housing assistant wider responsihilities than simply the collection of cash. In this way there is more scope for the officer concerned, his work is more interesting and less a matter of regular routine, so that there is a greater chance of attracting and keeping higher quality staff. We deplore the arrangement, practised hy some authorities which employ the systems described in paragraph 72 (a) and (b), under which as soon as a tenant is in arrears responsihility for collecting these is transferred to someone else. In this way the regular collector has no strong personal incentive to see that arrears are not allowed to hegin to accumulate.

Security

84. One argument against door-to-door collection is the security risk of having collectors walking ahout the streets carrying large amounts of cash. This risk is clearly increased hy the fact that they must inevitahly he well known as individuals and must keep to a fairly regular schedule of visits if they are to hope to find tenants (or their wives) at home. We have heard reports of assaults with violence and clearly any such happening must make any authority reconsider whether the system should be continued. On the other hand we have heard of housing assistants who despite the known risks preferred working in this way and helieved themselves well protected hy their very familiarity to the great majority of the people on the estates.

85. Various methods aie employed hy different authorities as extra security precautions. One authority send teams of collectors in a mini-hus to deal with a large estate so that, for example, two collectors simultaneously work their way along opposite sides of a street and others are at the same time in adjoining streets. Other ideas include providing all collectors with police whistles or arranging for a van from a security organisation to meet them at an agreed spot (which would he varied each time) halfway through the morning's collection in order to receive cash in locked pouches. The collectors would retain the keys of these so that at the end of the round they could collect the pouches at the district office, unlock them and check and reconcile their cash at the office at the end of the day.

Arrears

86. We would wish to mention only one or two aspects of the prohlem of rent arrears in the present context of rent collection systems. We deal in Chapter 11 more particularly with the methods of dealing with serious cases. Returning once more to our principle of prevention heing hetter than cure, the local authority should consider the factors which tend to cause tenants to fall into arrears with their rent, so as to see whether there might he any general way of preventing this from happening.

87. One example is given hy the various times of the year when the tenant is faced hy other suhstantial hut irregular demands on his resources. This applies especially at holiday times and at Christmas or New Year, when he is likely to spend all availahle cash without first setting aside the usual amount for the rent. This difficulty can often he avoided hy the practice, common among many authorities hut not yet general, of allowing two, four or even six "free" weeks in the year, coinciding with these holiday periods. The annual rent is therefore converted to a weekly or fortnightly payment on the hasis of a 50, 48 or 46 week year. In the "frec" weeks, only arrears are collected. As well as helping to reduce arrears, this system is popular with tenants and convenient for the authority, as it eases the hurden on their staff at holiday times. *We would therefore commend the practice to those authorities not already following it.*

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88. Arrears of rent sometimes occur because bills for gas and electricity are presented to tenants quarterly and, particularly in the case of modern houses, may involve considerable sums of money. The tenant may well be mindful of the threat held over him by the electricity and gas authorities to cut off his supplies and is more likely not to pay his rent. Where it appears to the housing authority that quarterly presentation of these bills is leading to difficulties in rent payment they may consider it worthwhile to approach the public boards concerned to arrange for a regular payment to be collected with the rent and passed on to the boards, subject to a commission being allowed to the housing authority to cover the cost of collection. This arrangement has been adopted with success in the case of a few new developments of houses for old people, and *we commend it for more general consideration.*

89. On the other hand we cannot agree with a form of persuasion to people in arrears with their rent which has recently been followed by one or two authorities. This is the practice of posting up in public lists of the names and addresses of tenants in arrears with their rent. Although this may work as an effective deterrent it offends against the social worker's principle that the interests of all parties are best served by sustaining the self-respect of a person who may be in only temporary difficulty. Strict confidentiality should therefore be preserved in all steps taken to deal with arrears.

Computers

90. The use of computors by local authorities in accounting for rent collection is spreading, and may necessitate some new thinking both on methods of rent collection and on where the responsibility for it should lie.

91. Some of the largest local authorities either already own or are arranging to buy their own computers, but in the main these authorities have not yet computerised their rent accounting. There are clearly still certain difficulties to be overcome, but it is likely that authorities which own computers will bring rent accounting on to the computer in due course. From the experience of one local authority which we visited and which is already carrying out its rent accounting by buying computer time, it seems clear that the use of computers for this purpose can in certain circumstances be an economic proposition and may become so more generally in future. Even if it proves more expensive under present conditions it may give immediate advantages in speedy availability of information. The advantages may be particularly obvious where the administration of rent rebate and rates rebate schemes is involved.

92. The particular method which we saw is suitable for central office collection. We have also been informed that an adaptation may be possible to suit the needs of door-to-door collection, either subject to, or possibly even without, the necessity of making entries by hand at the door and subsequently repeating each one into the punch tape machine. *We suggest therefore, that although the use of computers will be a new idea to many authorities it is one which may well repay further examination.*

93. It is likely that all computer operations will have to be centrally controlled by the finance department of the local authority, but this need not detract from the general principle that rent collection should be the responsibility of the housing department. In the particular authority referred to the collection of rent remained the responsibility of the housing department, and was carried out in its office. Similarly a door-to-door system could still be operated by trained housing assistants.

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CHAPTER 8

Repairs and Maintenance

94. The maintenance in good physical condition of the houses owned hy local authorities is one of the fundamental requirements of good management. Local authority houses are now financed over a period of 60 years and it is essential that they should be so maintained as to provide satisfactory accommodation for at least this period and if possible longer.

95. It is clear from experience with houses huilt soon after the first world war that regular attention to the fabric and equipment of the huildings, together with periodical general modernisation, is needed to keep them in service for the full period over which the cost is spread, and the same is likely to he true of houses huilt suhsequently.

96. Section 8 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1966 defines the responsibility of the landlord for the maintenance of a house leased on or after 3rd July 1962 on a lease for a period of less than 7 years. It states that the landlord is required to:—

(a) keep in repair the structure and exterior of the dwellinghouse (including drains, gutters and external pipes), and

(b) keep in proper repair and proper working order the installations in the house for the supply of water, gas and electricity and for sanitation (including basins, sinks, haths and sanitary conveniences but not other fixtures, fittings or appliances for making use of the supplies of water, gas or electricity) and for space heating or water heating.

97. This would apply to all local authority lettings. Beyond these limits, the local authority has discretion as to precisely what repair work it will undertake and what will he made the responsihility of the tenant under the terms and conditions of his tenancy. We return to this point in paragraph 109, hut wish to comment first on the method of carrying out the necessary repairs and maintenance and the location of responsihility for this work.

Organisation

98. Local authorities organise their repair and maintenance work in a number of different ways. Depending on the size of the authority, the numher of houses it owns and the way in which the departments of the authority are organised, the work may he carried out hy the architect's, engineer's, surveyor's or housing departments, either through contractors or hy direct labour, or hy a comhination of these methods.

99. Whatever the arrangements for the execution of the work of repair, it is imperative, from the point of view of landlord-tenant relations, that the housing department should have direct responsihility for carrying out regular inspections, receiving requests for repairs from tenants and for looking after the property hy seeing that all necessary repairs are in fact carried out. *In order to perform these tasks effectively it must be in a position to order the repairs to be carried out (and not merely to pass on the requests to*

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someone else), to follow up and see that they have been done, and to be responsible for budgetary control of expenditure on maintenance.

100. These conditions we would regard as the minimum satisfactory ones, but we have actually encountered many cases where the housing department has no control of repairs at all and its function is limited to passing on such requests for repairs as may come its way. This we regard as unsatisfactory both for the tenant who is apparently expected to deal with a variety of officers and departments of the authority, and for the authority in that it tends to result in slower and less effective action and to detract from the two basic principles of "prevention is better than cure" and of good landlord-tenant relationship.

Direct Labour

101. We recognise that in the case of some of the smaller authorities it may not be an economic proposition for the housing department to set up its own repair organisation. But where provided the scale of operation is sufficient (it has been suggested that this might be where more than 2,500 houses are owned by the authority[1]) we believe that the advantages of the housing department operating its own direct labour repairs service are such that the possibility of introducing this arrangement should be seriously considered by every authority of this size or larger. Where there is also repair work to be done on behalf of other departments and it is considered best to concentrate it in a single unified repairs organisation, we favour the system (which we found in certain English local authorities) of having the organisation as part of the housing department but available to do work for other departments on a properly costed basis. This last point is important, whether the works department is controlled by the housing department or not, since it is essential that the total expenditure on work for each department should be known and charged to the appropriate account.

102. From the point of view of efficient management there are many advantages in thus having the repairs organisation directly under the control of the housing department. One of the main ways in which this is of benefit concerns the speed at which repairs can be carried out. Among other reasons why speed is important is the need to maintain a good relationship with the tenant, and also by showing him that the authority is particular about the physical condition of the house, to encourage him for his part to take more care of it and to take prompt action in the case of any repairs for which he is responsible under the conditions of tenancy.

103. If however, it is considered impracticable to place a direct labour repairs organisation actually within the housing department, as may be the case in very large as well as small authorities, we consider it essential that the housing department should have authority to order work to be carried out and to indicate priorities; the organisation should not take its instructions direct from tenants or from other departments.

Empty Houses

104. Another advantage, from the authority's point of view, of giving the housing department direct control of repair work, is in minimising the time for which a house remains empty after the departure of one tenant and before it can be relet to another. At this stage some repairs and occasionally some redecoration are almost always required, but we found that the time taken for this work to be done varied very greatly between authorities. Although our researches on this point have not been extensive enough to warrant a firm conclusion being drawn, there appears to be some evidence to suggest that a single control both of letting and of repairs can result in a positive financial saving to the authority through a reduction in the loss of rent experienced through "voids" when houses are standing empty before being relet.

[1] *Housing Management*, by J. P. Macey and C. V. Baker, The Estates Gazette Ltd. 1965, Chapter 21.

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105. We do not wish to overstress this point; frequently, in the case of pre-war houses, the time taken for these repairs is extended because the authority takes the opportunity of the house being vacant to carry out some major modernisation programme, a practice which we warmly commend (see paragraph 117). This, however, may he done by all authorities and should not basically alter the comparison which we were ahle to make. This showed that the figures for voids returned to the housing revenue account ranged from as little as 10d. to as much as 10s. 3d. per house per year. In a few cases the figure was divided hetween true voids and those due to the need to carry out improvements and we recommend that this distinction should always be made, in order that the authority may know how it stands financially as a result of its practice in dealing with repairs.

106. The following table does not pretend to be exhaustive but reproduces figures which were given to us hy certain local authorities which we visited.

VOIDS

	Total Voids (1964/65) £	Average voids per house per year	Stock of Houses	Number of houses built 1.1.45 to 31.3.66	Number of houses built 1919 to 1944	Number of "other" houses	Percentage "other" houses in stock of houses
Edinburgh	21,000	10s. 3d.	41,000	24,907	15,220	873	2.1%
Glasgow	34,000	4s. 11d.	137,000	70,926	54,895	11,179	8.1%
Lanark County	3,000	1s. 2d.	50,000	27,771	19,617	2,612	5.2%
Ayr Burgh	2,047	5s. 4d.	7,700	4,967	2,217	516	6.7%
Ayr County	9,722	9s. 2d.	21,250	13,957	6,468	825	3.9%
Paisley Burgh	779	10d.	18,700	10,005	7,353	1,342	7.1%

N.B. Voids in Ayr County include houses in former mining areas for which there is now little demand.

107. The actual time for which a house stood empty was quoted at periods varying from 2 to 3 days to as long as 3 to 4 months. The longest periods were in those areas where the housing department waited until the house was vacant, then asked the works department to check and repair it and waited until the latter reported the house ready for reletting, before taking steps to allocate it to a new tenant. By contrast, where the housing department was in full control, it could adopt the most efficient and speedy procedure available. The procedure which we recommend consists in arranging a detailed inspection of the house a week or two hefore the departure of the old tenant, at which all work required to be done would be noted, including that which should be charged to the outgoing tenant. Immediately on his departure the tradesmen could then move in, if necessary heing taken off other work for this purpose, knowing exactly what they had to do and heing in a position to complete the work in the minimum time. Meanwhile the new tenant would he ready and waiting to move in as soon as the work was done.

108. We should mention here the unsatisfactory practice of one large authority which rightly regards it as essential to relet a vacant house as rapidly as possihle hut, in view of its long waiting list and to preserve the empty house from vandalism, carries out no more than an inspection of the vacant house, leaving any necessary work to he done at a later date, after the new tenant has heen in occupation, in some cases, for several weeks. We regard this as a very poor basis on which to hegin a tenancy, in no way likely to induce

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in the tenant any sense of responsibility for the property which should always be in "good tenantable order" when he takes it over.

Responsibilities of the tenant

109. There is a fairly wide variation in the extent to which the tenant is made responsible for internal repairs. In 1946 the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee advised in favour of local authorities themselves carrying out internal decoration of their houses; our evidence suggests that this advice was not followed and that virtually all authorities now make the tenant responsible for all interior decoration. A few authorities will do a limited amount of decoration on a change of tenancy, especially where the house has been left in a particularly bad decorative condition or is proving difficult to relet, and also in cases where the incoming tenant is an old age pensioner, or disabled person. Some authorities may also help a new tenant with materials or labour only, or may allow him a few weeks free of rent as a contribution towards the cost.

110. Generally, however, we consider that it is reasonable to make the tenant responsible for the interior decoration of the house, since as well as resulting in an economy for the authority, most tenants are well able to do this work satisfactorily and are glad of the opportunity to choose their own colour schemes for their homes. The position of the authority can be safeguarded by a clause in the conditions of tenancy requiring the tenant to make good any damage or internal alteration which he may cause in the course of redecoration. Apart from the special cases mentioned in the previous paragraph we do not consider that there is any need for full redecoration before a house is relet and we regard the practice of a few authorities who insist on bringing each house up to "new" standard before reletting it as unnecessary and extravagant and liable to cause resentment among other tenants of long standing.

111. Apart from decoration, most authorities require tenants to be responsible for certain other specified minor repairs, though the extent of these varies. We were interested in the view which was expressed to us by one witness familiar with conditions in all parts of Scotland, that local authorities in the north and east of Scotland tend to require more off their tenants than those in the south and west, and that the social tradition in the former areas encourages this and results in a much higher standard of care of property by the tenants. In rural areas generally the tenants were also said to take greater care of their houses and the implication was that where more is expected of the tenants more is given and a better standard is achieved.

112. While we do not doubt the facts as reported to us we suspect that they may be due to local authorities taking advantage of the prevailing social attitude rather than actually influencing it by their policy. Nevertheless we consider that it is a sound policy to adopt any measures which, while giving the tenant a fair deal from the landlord's side, at the same time encourage in him a responsible attitude to the house he lives in.

Charging for recoverable expenditure

113. Where certain repairs are the responsibility of the tenant, or where the tenant wishes with the permission of the authority to carry out minor alterations or to replace certain fittings or fixtures, the authority may undertake to carry out the work and to recover the cost in instalments spread over a period and collected with the rent. This has the advantage of enabling the housing department to control the standard of workmanship. Where the tenant is allowed to employ an outside contractor to do the work it is advisable to insist that the contractor be chosen from a list approved by the authority.

114. The problem of recovering the cost of chargeable repairs from an outgoing tenant sometimes causes difficulty. A device used by one authority is to charge an extra 2s. per week which is added to the rent during the first year and is then treated as a deposit of £5 4s. which is retained until the end of the tenancy. It can then be used to meet any

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recoverable items and the balance, if any, refunded to the outgoing tenant. Except for the possible criticism that the amount of the deposit is too low in relation to present day costs, to cover all charges which are likely to remain outstanding at the end of a tenancy, we consider this a sensible procedure which may well commend itself for wider adoption.

Routine maintenance and inspection

115. Apart from repairs which arise from time to time with a greater or less degree of urgency, there are certain matters which require routine attention at regular intervals. Outside painting is an obvious example, but there are other things such as central heating installations which may need regular servicing. As well as arranging for these, which can often conveniently be done on a contract basis, the housing department should ensure that every property is regularly inspected. Where door-to-door rent collection is carried out by trained housing assistants, they can usually cover this need in the course of their regular visits, arranging for more thorough structural inspections by a building inspector when this seems to be needed. But where rent is collected at a central or district office it is important to arrange a separate inspection for all houses at suitable intervals, and no house should be left longer than a year without a visit. It must be remembered that although most tenants will report defects and ask for repairs to be carried out, there will always he some who will fail to do this, and the housing department is no less responsible for ensuring that their houses are maintained in good condition than for all the others. Moreover some faults can develop so slowly that the tenant may fail to notice them.

Conclusion

116. To summarise the views already expressed in this chapter, *we consider it essential for the housing department to be responsible for repairs and maintenance of the authority's houses. It should be financially responsible to the authority for expenditure on repairs and for estimating the amount of the annual contribution to be made to the housing repairs account. Where practicable a direct labour organisation for carrying our repairs should be part of the department. It should prepare estimates and keep records showing the actual expenditure on maintenance of houses of different types so as to be in a position to advise on this aspect of the suitability of those various types for future construction.*

Modernisation and Improvement of Older Houses

117. As indicated in paragraph 95, the responsibility of the housing authority for the maintenance of houses cannot he confined to keeping them in good order at the standard to which they were originally built. Many houses built before the last war are unsatisfactory by modern standards, particularly in such matters as heating arrangements, electrical wiring and the provision of power points, and the quality of such equipment as sinks or wash tuhs. *There is a pressing need to modernise these houses and bring them up to currently accepted standards.*

118. In addition to these houses, the authority may for one reason or another acquire old property, which may not be due for demolition for many years and which must meanwhile form part of the general pool of housing available for letting. Such houses, as well as suffering from the sort of defects mentioned above, may lack some of the basic amenities.

119. The authority, on acquiring such property, should consider what can be done to hring it up to a satisfactory standard, depending upon its remaining estimated useful life. *As a first step the housing department should draw up a programme for carrying out the work.*

120. In the case of the pre-war council houses which are not up to modern standards, it will prohably be necessary to arrange to carry out any major renovations as and when each

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house falls vacant. Certain items, however, such as replacing obsolete sinks, can be done while the houses are occupied and it is often most economical for such replacements to be obtained and fitted in a single bulk operation.

121. If action is taken on the recommendation, in the recent report "Scotland's Older Houses"[2], that local authorities should be more active in acquiring old property with a view to its improvement, the volume of this sort of improvement work may increase substantially. If a major operation on these lines is envisaged by a large authority, it may be necessary to set up a special organisation to carry it out, but any such organisation should be part of the housing department.

Finance

122. In the simple case of older council houses which need rewiring or the fitting of power points, or the replacement of old-fashioned sinks, the local authority will, under existing legislation, have to meet most of the cost of this work themselves. Where this is beyond the resources of the housing repairs account it may be appropriate to spread the cost over a period by borrowing. The limited modernisation of old houses which the authority may happen to possess, as mentioned in paragraph 119, may perhaps be financed adequately with the assistance of the improvement grants available to local authorities under the Housing Acts. Where an extensive programme is undertaken of acquiring and improving old houses as recommended in the report "Scotland's Older Houses", we support the view expressed in that report that *special Government financial assistance would be an essential requirement. We would also like to see an extension of the type of work which can qualify for improvement grants to cover major renovation of older council property, including certain replacement of obsolete equipment, which does not at present qualify for assistance.*

[2] Report by a sub-committee of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee, H.M.S.O. 1967.

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CHAPTER 9

Amenity and Social Development of Housing Estates

123. In this Chapter we comment on two distinct but related subjects. The relationship arises because both are concerned with the fundamental object of making a housing estate into a satisfactory place to live, from both physical and social points of view. Proper attention to each one can greatly affect the other. These two matters concern the external appearance of housing estates and the community facilities provided.

Appearance and Amenity of housing estates

124. It is an unfortunate but inescapable fact, of which we have been forcibly reminded in the course of our visits to local authorities, that many of the earlier Council estates, including some built in the earlier years after the last war, present a very drab and unattractive outward appearance. This is often due in the first place to poor design or layout, but has frequently been worsened by general neglect and failure to look after private gardens and communal open spaces. This in its turn can induce an irresponsible social attitude among the people living in the area which may encourage vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. All of this tends to result in a rapid deterioration in the social character of the neighbourhood which will drive away the more responsible of the inhabitants and lead others to refuse offers of housing in the area.

125. There is sometimes a tendency to suppose that improved housing is the solution to all the social ills which are so obviously concentrated in the older type of slum property. But although the appalling condition of slum dwellings is due mainly to causes unconnected with the character of the inhabitants, it is not to be expected that this character has been so unaffected by generations of poor living conditions that the simple act of removal to a modern dwelling incorporating the basic minimum amenities of civilised existence, will automatically produce a totally new outlook on life.

126. Yet this outlook on life has to be changed if Scotland is to be saved from the ultimate condemnation of future generations of having laboured and impoverished herself to demolish the old slums only to replace them with houses which will eventually become new slums no better than the old.

127. What can be done to prevent this happening? Fundamentally this is the task of management. Given well-planned new estates in future, we believe that with constant and unremitting endeavour good management can be instrumental in reversing the tendency and in helping new, well balanced and socially stable communities to be formed.

128. This, however, may not be enough to solve the problem of the poor quality of some existing estates. We offer below some suggestions regarding points to which attention should be directed, but we believe that these may not be enough in themselves and that some more drastic approach to the problem may be needed if these estates are to be rescued from the drab band of squalor which has already touched them. *We regard this as*

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a vital and urgent problem which would repay a special and detailed investigation of its own. We recommend that such an investigation should be undertaken as soon as possible, perhaps as a further remit for a sub-committee of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee.

Gardens

129. One thing which perhaps makes more difference than any other to the external appearance of housing estates is the way the gardens are maintained. Unfortunately, experience has shown that, among any group of tenants, keen gardeners are in a minority. Steady persuasion will induce a further proportion to keep their gardens reasonably tidy, even though not particularly well cultivated, but there is likely to remain a small number who refuse to do anything to their gardens. A few such people, if not checked, will quickly discourage the others and soon bring about a general poor appearance of the estate. *We therefore recommend that authorities should make a point of enforcing strictly the clause in the conditions of tenancy which requires the tenant to keep his garden tidy.*

130. Many more new housing estates are being designed with paved and landscaped areas instead of individual front gardens, and the number of existing houses with their own gardens is usually enough to permit them to be allocated to those people who are really keen. Where there is a nucleus of the latter, others may be encouraged to join their number by the dissemination of advice on gardening and by the housing department taking an active part, for example by organising gardening competitions, encouraging the formation of clubs, and arranging assistance for elderly and disabled tenants unable to look after their gardens.

131. Where neglect has gone too far, it may prove best to clear and pave over the front gardens. In this case, as with the landscaped areas of new estates, maintenance becomes the responsibility of the authority.

132. The work of maintenance may be carried out by the parks or highways departments or, in landward areas, on the district council, hut the housing department should see that it is carried out. It should see that landscaped areas are properly looked after and improved where required by new planting, and should watch for any fresh neglect which required special measures.

133. Where there is a grassed area at the corner of a street and people tend to walk across it to cut the corner, it may he advisable to preserve the amenity either by suitable fencing or by providing a direct paved footpath.

134. Arrangements for refuse collection sometimes fail to prevent considerahle amounts of ruhbish and paper being dropped, leaving an untidy and unsightly appearance which, in turn, discourages people from bothering to dispose of litter properly. The housing department may think it worth while to employ men to clear up the sort of litter which the normal system does not touch, but it is infinitely preferable that the system operated by the cleansing department is such as to ensure that the area is left completely clean and tidy.

135. These are only a few of the many points of detail on which the attention of the housing department can make a substantial difference. *It is important the department should have constantly in view the objective of making the external appearance of all housing estates as attractive as possible.*

Social development

136. The second half of this important task of taking all possible steps to create a healthy living community on a housing estate is concerned with the provision of community facilities. The provision of the many facilities which, as well as housing, are essential to the creation of a satisfactory social entity, are outside the scope of this report. Nevertheless we consider that we must stress the great need for new housing estates to he

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given these facilities at the earliest possible stage. They are, of course, not by any means all the responsibility of the housing authority, and it is important for that authority to liaise with others concerned to ensure that the facilities are planned and provided simultaneously with the housing.

137. We mention particularly the need for a club room or community centre and for playgrounds for small children who cannot be expected to go far afield for their recreation. Housing authorities have powers to provide facilities of this kind where they are required in connection with a particular housing scheme[1]. If they are not otherwise being provided, *we consider that housing authorities should not hesitate to make use of these powers in order to ensure that at least some provision is made at the same time as the houses are completed.* It is at this stage that the need is likely to be felt most acutely and if there is a long delay before such facilities are provided, there is a risk that a poor social attitude may develop on the estate and that the task of rehabilitation at a later date will be doubly difficult. This is yet another instance of prevention being better and considerably easier than belated attempts at a cure.

138. We realise that there are many difficulties to be overcome. A transitional problem may arise with the new provision of community facilities close to old housing areas where such facilities are lacking. For example the new children's playgrounds may be swamped by children from outside the area for which they were designed. This, however, when it arises, should be taken as an indication of the need for more facilities and should not be allowed to discourage the authority from making appropriate provision in new schemes.

139. We also draw attention to the common failure to make the maximum possible use of existing facilities, such as school buildings and playgrounds, which are seldom available for other purposes in the evening and during school holidays. We appreciate the difficulties to be overcome, but with goodwill these are not insuperable. *In our view, the need for greatly increased provision for social and recreational activities is so urgent that all possible steps should be taken to secure co-operation between the authorities concerned in order to achieve this objective. It would be appropriate for the housing department to take a positive lead in initiating discussions for this purpose at the earliest planning stage.*

Management of community facilities

140. If the housing department is to foster a sound community spirit on housing estates, it will have a delicate role to play in connection with the maintenance and running of community centres and other recreational facilities, especially where they are provided by another authority. Some control over their use will need to be exercised and a club room or community centre will need proper running if it is to be used effectively to the best advantage of all interested parties. In a large area a warden may be appointed but, whether this is possible or not, it is best if the general policy on the use of the centre is decided by an active committee of the people who live in the area and use the centre. It may be considered desirable for the housing department to be represented on this committee and to contribute help to the project; the department may sometimes have to take unobtrusive steps to get such a committee started; but if possible both the initiative and the running of the centre should rest with the residents and users rather than with the local authority.

141. For these purposes it may be useful to make a specified officer in the housing department specially responsible for watching over all such facilities throughout the whole area of the authority, so that his practical experience of the success or failure in one housing scheme can be applied to the benefit of others.

Residents' Associations

142. In the same way, properly organised and administered residents' associations can be a great help both in keeping in touch with the needs and wishes of the people, and to

[1] Housing (Scotland) Act 1966, section 139.

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the local community itself. Here again, although basically it is not the responsibility of the housing authority actually to form such associations, some advice and encouragement at the right moment can often be of great assistance in ensuring that the associations do in fact get started and operate on sound and co-operative lines. *We recommend that in any major new housing area where such an association is not already in being, the housing authority should consider why one has not been formed and what steps they might take to encourage this form of community development.*

Conclusion

143. To conclude this Chapter, we stress once more that we regard the successful integration of new housing estates into the surrounding community, and the rehabilitation of some older estates where this has not been achieved, as one the most important tasks facing Scottish local authorities today, perhaps even the most important of all. Without success in this sphere all efforts at slum clearance, education and the physical development of local authority areas can go for nought. Success can only be achieved by proper management of housing estates and attention to the needs of their tenants as communities, whether the estates are large or small. We are convinced that any authorities which do not pay proper attention to these matters will be unable to meet the challenge of the future effectively.

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CHAPTER 10

General Supervision and Welfare

144. In this Chaper we consider the welfare side of housing management. Some special aspects of this matter will be dealt witb in the next following Chapter.

145. The 1946 report laid stress on the importance of developing the welfare side of management, but on this subject, as on others which we have discussed, we have formed the impression that only a minority of Scottish local authorities have given the matter the special attention which it deserves. Many experienced housing managers whom we have met are acutely aware of the problem and would like to do more than is in fact possible owing to their limited staff. In this field particularly *we would like to impress on local authorities the fact that prevention is very much better than cure, and that in order to carry out the task effectively and so avoid serious trouble later, they must be prepared to spend money on early preventive measures.*

146. Difficulty sometimes arises in deciding just how far the welfare functions of the housing department should go, and at what point they should hand over to the welfare department. This difficulty may apply particularly in small burghs where the welfare authority (the county council) is different from the housing authority. Close consultation must be maintained even though it may be true, as has been suggested to us, that welfare problems are proportionately fewer in small towns and in rural areas than they are in the more densely populated urban centres.

147. As suggested in the previous paragraph, the key to any possible "demarcation" difficulties lies in close collaboration between the housing and welfare departments at all levels. It is not appropriate for the housing department to include specially trained welfare staff of its own, as this would cause an overlapping of functions. Nevertheless welfare officers recognise a large field of preliminary "semi-welfare" matters wbich normally come first to the notice of the housing department and which may often be dealt with by the department without the necessity of passing on every minor problem to the welfare department.

148. For example we have already commented on the importance of visiting a prospective new tenant in his present home before deciding on the allocation of a house. From this visit some assessment can be made of the way in which he can be expected to settle down in his new accommodation after he has moved. Many will have no difficulty and this is likely to be seen easily from the first visit. Others, and this applies especially to people moving from old, possibly unfit housing to a new estate, will encounter many difficulties at first. We have suggested that for some such people a transfer to an existing house may be better than a complete change to a new scheme, resulting in a more gradual transition. This however may be possible only in a limited number of cases and there are likely to be many people who will need help on first moving to a completely new type of house in a completely new environment.

149. A move of this kind is undoubtedly one of the critical periods in the life of a family and there are many ways in which a little help can make a great difference to their

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success in settling down in their new surroundings. The difficulties they are likely to encounter may fall into three groups :—

(a) A feeling of strangeness and isolation, being parted from familiar friendly neighbours and arriving in a place which may be far from shops or other places where people are likely to meet and get to know each other. This sense of isolation, which particularly affects older people, and especially on estates on the outskirts of a town, can persist for a long time unless early steps are taken to develop community facilities in conjunction with a new housing estate from the earliest stage.

(b) Difficulty in getting used to new forms of equipment which may be available in new houses, especially such things as electric cookers and various forms of central heating, misuse of which can quickly lead to very expensive bills being run up.

(c) Perhaps most important of all, financial problems. Many people rehoused from a clearance area are likely to be in the lower income brackets. If they have previously lived in a controlled tenancy the rent of the new house may be much higher than the old, new furnishings may be needed and there may be extra expenses on fares to and from work, shopping centres, schools and friends and relations with whom they will wish to keep in touch.

150. Regarding (a) above we have discussed in Chapter 9 some of the ways in which a sense of community and good neighbourliness can be fostered in a new housing estate and we wish to stress once again how important this is.

151. The problem discussed in (b) above ought to be easy to overcome, given a little special effort by the housing department. Yet it is often neglected, and we have heard of cases of quite surprising misuse of new types of appliances simply through misunderstanding. Sometimes detailed written instructions are provided, in the form either of a tenants' handbook or of special instructions for the appliances concerned, but these are not always easy to understand. We do not wish to minimise the usefulness of tenants' handbooks; provided they are thoughtfully compiled so as to give, in simple terms, information on as many matters as possible which may be useful to a new tenant, they can be very helpful. But they should not be treated as a substitute for the personal visit to give oral explanations of points of difficulty, or simply to draw attention to the information contained in the handbook.

152. For these reasons, as well as others discussed below, *we recommend that the family should be visited as soon as possible after they move into a new house in order to discuss how they are settling down and to deal with any problems and difficulties which may have arisen.* In addition, when new types of electric or gas heating systems are provided, it would be of great advantage for *a representative of the electricity or gas board to call and explain how to get the best use out of the appliances in the most economical manner.*

153. The need for visits from a trained member of the housing department is all the more important when the tenant is in any sort of financial difficulty. If these difficulties are not sorted out quickly at the very beginning, they can lead all too readily to a really intractable problem. For example, a higher level of rent may present a problem. If this arises from the tenant's financial circumstances, the solution may lie in a rent rebate, but the scheme may need to be brought specially to the attention of the tenant. The cost of removal can also be high. Where the tenant is being moved from old property acquired by the local authority for clearance or redevelopment or on which a closing order has been placed, the authority has power to contribute towards the reasonable expenses of removal[1]. We understand that this power is very little used by local authorities, and although we recognise that to offer help in some cases and not in others could lead to difficulties, *we recommend that the possibility of using it in appropriate cases should be borne in mind.*

154. Another cause of extra expense on moving to a new house is the need, real or apparent, to provide extra furniture. The new house may be bigger than the old, new

1 Housing (Scotland) Act 1966, section 160.

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curtains and carpets may be needed, or the tenant may feel that his old furniture is unfit for the new house. In an effort to keep up with his new neighbours he may embark on hire purchase of new furniture far beyond what he can afford. On the other hand, extreme cases have been known, especially with elderly single people who may have been living as lodgers, where the new tenant has virtually no furniture of his own at all and when visited by a welfare officer was found to have nothing to sit on or eat off except wooden boxes.

155. In seeking to help in cases such as these, the local authority may wish to make use of their powers[2] to provide furniture for sale to their tenants on a hire purchase basis, collecting the payments together with the rent. The first essential, however, is that an experienced and friendly visitor from the housing department should be available from the start to give advice on drawing up the family budget so that it can be clearly seen what can be afforded and what cannot. If rent is collected by the door-to-door method by a trained housing assistant, this can be made the opportunity for help of this kind to be given. In other cases, special arrangements will need to be made for the tenant to be visited, to start with, at fairly frequent intervals. Later, if all is going well, the number of visits can be reduced but the housing department would be wise to keep in touch with all families who have been the subject of special help of this kind, so as to make sure that they do not get into fresh difficulties later.

156. Although where office rent collection is practised, it is possible to arrange special visits by members of the housing department, we suggest that *when large housing developments are first occupied the authority should consider whether it would be advisable for door-to-door rent collection to be carried out for some time* until it is seen how the tenants are settling down and whether any of them are likely to find difficulty in continuing to pay rent regularly without the stimulus of a visit from the rent collector. If, after a sufficient period has elapsed (the length of this period would vary according to the circumstances of the scheme and the tenants), there remain only a few doubtful payers, it would be reasonable to transfer the scheme generally to office collection, but to retain door-to-door collection with regular visits by the housing assistant to those tenants who seemed to continue to need help and advice.

[2] Housing (Scotland) Act, 1966, section 140.

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CHAPTER 11

Some Special Welfare Problems

Unsatisfactory tenants

157. Among tenants of every local authority's houses are to be found a number who regularly cause trouble to the housing department. These families are probably suffering from a wide variety of problems, but the first symptom to be detected by the housing department is usually a persistent failure to pay the rent. Other points which can also come to notice include failure to keep the property clean or in good repair, or behaviour which gives rise to complaints or quarrels with neighbours. This may be caused by the tenants themselves or by their failure to curb unruly behaviour on the part of their children.

158. People of this kind, often referred to as problem families, present a difficult challenge. In some cases, after all other measures have been tried unsuccessfully, there may be no alternative to eviction of the family from the house they occupy. But it must be remembered that this action in itself does not solve the problem and is in fact an admission of failure. The family, even if removed from the council house, is still within the community and has got to stay somewhere. At this point the welfare authority may have to step in, for example to provide temporary accommodation and the children's authority may have to take the children into care. Neither is a satisfactory solution; the first can of its nature only be temporary and does little to make the family more satisfactory as tenants in future; in the latter case the family becomes split up, often permanently. The cost to the authority of keeping the children is likely to be far greater than the loss of rent owed by the tenant. We recognise, of course, that in fairness to all the other tenants who do meet their obligations, there can be no question of allowing a problem family to remain permanently in a normal house rent-free, but we wish to keep the problem in perspective.

159. We are aware that most authorities do endeavour to avoid having to proceed to the extreme length of evicting a family, and also that they are in duty bound by section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 to take all possible measures including financial ones to prevent the need arising for children to be taken into care. Yet the problem remains and is increasing. What then can be done?

160. For this purpose we are assuming that all the measures previously recommended have been tried; visitation before allocating a house has revealed the probable character of the family; instead of a house at a high rent in a new housing area, where the family would be certain to have trouble, they have been housed in an existing house where the rent may be lower and the surrounding less strange; since moving in they have been visited regularly and been advised on budgeting. The fact remains, however, that they still give trouble.

161. Housing staff will quickly become aware of problems which go beyond their resources to provide help, and other agencies must then be called in to give assistance. The welfare authority may be able to help with some aspects of the tenants' needs. The welfare officer will normally co-ordinate his own activities with those of voluntary

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agencies so as to avoid a multiplicity of visitors offering overlapping, and even sometimes conflicting, advice.

162. If a tenant who is in arrears with his rent is known to be in receipt of an allowance from the Ministry of Social Security, then the Ministry should be informed. (If he is not in receipt of an allowance he may like to be put in touch with the Ministry). Any such allowance is likely to include an element intended to cover rent. When that is the case, the Ministry are sometimes willing to take special steps to ensure that the allowance paid for rent is actually used for that purpose. In some cases they will, in the first place, pay only part of the allowance to the tenant and withhold the balance of his benefit until he has produced his rent book or other record to show that the rent has been paid. In a few extreme cases where there is no alternative to eviction they may even pay the allowance for rent direct to the local authority as landlord. Generally, however, their aim is to educate the recipient of benefit to a more responsible attitude and to try to raise his self respect by encouraging him to pay the rent himself[1].

163. Whether measures of this kind are suitable for a particular case or not, it is clearly important that close contact be maintained with the local officers of the Ministry of Social Security, and we are glad to note that this form of liaison is already maintained by many authorities. We feel it is also perhaps worth mentioning that it was the opinion of some of our members and of witnesses that the statutory requirement that 28 days' notice must be given before eviction proceedings can be commenced[2], sometimes acts against the interests of the tenant. Because he knows that he has that period of grace he tends to allow arrears to build up to a greater extent than if the threat of eviction could be put into effect more quickly.

164. But as we have said, rent may not be the only problem. What of the family whose house is dirty and whose behaviour is such as to cause endless complaints and friction with the neighbours? There are two ways of dealing with this, and probably both must be attempted. These are removal and re-education.

Removal

165. If the problem family are living in a new housing scheme where their behaviour is particularly noticeable and offensive, it may be advisable to move them into older accommodation, somewhere between the quality of newly built council houses and of the older property from which the tenants may have come. It would indeed have been better if the tenant had been allocated that type of house in the first instance (see paragraph 160) but at the time there may have been no such houses vacant. In order to find a place for them now the authority may have to resort to "decanting", namely moving one tenant to another (perhaps better) house, in order to create a vacancy for another family in a type of house more suited to their special needs. In any case we believe that the availability of this form of older housing is an important part of the method of dealing with problem families and *we recommend that all local authorities which are faced with this sort of problem should make sure that they have a reasonable pool of this type of house available.* If necessary they should take special steps to acquire it for the purpose. In practice tenement type dwellings are not ideally suitable but it is recognised that there may be little alternative.

Re-education

166. The possibility of teaching a problem family to live in a manner which will later allow them to move or return to a modern housing estate without a repetition of the old troubles, can only be provided by close supervision and regular visits. Some local

1 *Unsatisfactory Tenants*, Report by a sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee, H.M.S.O. 1955, Appendix 2.
2 Rent Act 1957, section 16.

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authorities have arranged special training for housewives and this can be of great value, especially if it is carried out in the trainees' own homes by sensible and practical women who have themselves coped successfully with the problems of bringing up a family.

167. Such supervision and training may not be easy to arrange when the families requiring this special attention are scattered about the town in different places, and it may in any case be difficult to find houses for them in the various areas, all of which would achieve the object of keeping them away from neighbours with whom they cannot get on. Suitable older non-scheme houses here and there, as we have mentioned, may provide a limited solution, and may be located in an environment more similar to the place of origin of the problem family, so that they find it more congenial and easier to fit in to the neighbourhood. It should be recognised that resentment of a neighbour can be expressed by good as well as bad tenants, and the question of compatability should not be overlooked where a question of the resettlement of a tenant arises.

The Paisley Scheme

168. At this point, therefore, we refer to the scheme at Paisley where a special area (45 houses) in one housing estate has been set aside for problem families, where they are given daily supervision combined with training and instruction designed to teach them the elements of homecraft and mothercraft so that in due course, when they have proved they can manage their own affairs, domestic, financial and otherwise, they can return to a better house in a more desirable neighbourhood.

169. Nowadays the word "segregation" has become virtually a term of abuse. Several of our witnesses expressed strong opinions against formal segregation, but we noticed that they had no equally constructive alternative suggestion to offer. We also feel bound to point out that all local authorities exercise segregation to a greater or lesser degree in their allocation procedure, for example by assessment of income levels and visitation reports determining suitability for certain schemes or houses. Some people are opposed to any form of grouping together of problem families on the grounds that the particular group of houses would soon become known for what it was and a stigma would be attached to the people living there. They also pointed out that the bad example which the tenants would set to each other would make it difficult or impossible to educate them to better standards.

170. We were, however, impressed by the fact that the experience of Paisley Town Council with their supervised area did not fully bear out these criticisms. As far as the social stigma of having lived there is concerned, this is thought to be no worse than the stigma of having been evicted from a council house and it is only when the latter course would otherwise be unavoidable and after a long period of warning, (which in itself is effective in a large number of cases) that a transfer to the supervised area is made. We stress that a scheme of this kind is a remedy of last resort, employed only when the family cannot be allowed to remain in normal accommodation and would otherwise have to be evicted. No one is compelled to enter the supervised area; those who do clearly find it preferable to being left without any house of their own.

171. Clearly a scheme of this nature has its pitfalls. We have no doubt that if it were possible to provide the same degree of close supervision and help for all problem families in their present homes without concentrating them into a special area, this would be preferable, although it would not solve the problem of the family whose behaviour leads to endless complaints from neighbours. This last problem, with which many local authorities are faced, can result in the serious deterioration of whole housing areas because of the presence of a few difficult families: other families tend to move away until it becomes impossible to find tenants for vacant houses, in spite of the length of the waiting list. In any case, we have to accept that there is a serious shortage of suitable trained staff to carry out work of this kind and that for a given cost and number of staff, more concentrated attention can be given to a greater number of people if they are brought together into one easily supervised area.

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172. For this reason we regard the Paisley scheme as a positive contribution to a situation in which housing departments are accustomed to being told that welfare staff cannot take on any more cases. Moreover as far as training is concerned the record at Paisley is good. Out of 243 tenants who have been recommended for supervision since the inception of the scheme in 1942 only 13 had to be finally evicted, 53 improved prior to supervision, and 71 have been transferred out to normal scheme tenancies. Behaviour in the supervised area has been found to be no worse than outside it and the fact that it does in fact form part of a much larger estate and that removals in and out are arranged within the housing department and without publicity helps to reduce resentment to a minimum. We consider certain outside comments which have been loosely quoted from time to time in the press to the effect that the Paisley scheme has "failed" to be quite unjustified. On the other hand we would not wish our own comments on this scheme to be given excessive publicity for the simple reason that all publicity, good or bad, given to a scheme of this kind, is bound to have an adverse effect on the scheme itself which will work best without too much attention from outside.

173. It must be recognised that many of these families, either from mental retardation or from moral or physical behaviour, have become so helpless in themselves that only close attention and care will be good enough to restore a semblance of self respect. Likewise consideration for the children in such a family must be of paramount importance if generation is not to succeed generation as the rejects of society.

174. *We therefore recommend that the idea of a scheme of the Paisley kind should not be dismissed out of hand as has tended to happen in the past, but should be kept in view as an expedient which can be of value in appropriate circumstances.* We stress, however, that the way in which a scheme of this nature is administered is of the greatest importance. The first essential is for the housing department to ensure that any action is only taken after close consultation with all authorities and departments with an interest in the problem, including the health, welfare and childrens departments. Above all, although the demands on skilled welfare staff may be less than if the same results were to be obtained without moving the tenants to special area, nevertheless it is essential that thoroughly competent and dedicated staff to run the scheme should be available. An outline of the way the scheme is operated in practice at Paisley is given at Appendix D.

Housing for the Elderly and Disabled

175. We turn now to housing problems of the elderly and the disabled. The two are grouped together since the special problems of elderly people often arise from the extent to which with the passing of time they cease to be able to move around easily, so that they require special facilities in the house similar to those needed by people who have become disabled at an earlier age.

176. We heard a good deal of evidence about this problem. It seems clear that, although many local authorities are aware of the need for special housing provision for elderly people, the number of these is increasing so that the need is not yet being adequately met and much more attention to the problem is required. Medical science is contributing greatly to keeping more people alive and active for longer. Between 1931 and 1961 the percentage of the population of Scotland over the age of 60 increased from 11.3 per cent to 15.6 per cent[3]. What does this mean in housing terms?

177. In the first place it does not simply mean the provision of houses specially designed and equipped for the physically handicapped. This is of course important, and such features as absence of steps, convenient access for wheel-chairs and invalid cars, doors wide enough for wheel-chairs to pass, handrails beside baths and lavatories, together with a suitable house layout and appropriate forms of heating, should be included in the design of any houses specially built for the elderly and disabled. Adaptations of this kind may also have to be made when an ordinary house is to be occupied by an infirm or disabled person.

[3] Source: *Census 1961*, Age, Marital Condition and General Tables.

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178. Detailed advice on these technical matters can be provided hy the welfare authority, and it is essential that such advice should be taken into consideration when houses are being planned for this purpose. Similarly when an infirm or disahled person is to he allocated a house, the welfare authority should always be informed and the allocation of houses which have been specially provided or adapted from welfare funds should only he carried out in consultation with the welfare officer. There are however other aspects of the matter which are the special concern of management.

How management can help

179. The most important of these matters concerns the allocation of houses in different locations. In passing, it may be pointed out that the need for special provision can arise in ordinary housing allocations, not merely when the prospective tenant is an elderly person. It may, for example, be discovered when a prospective new tenant is visited in his home hefore an allocation is made, that he has an elderly or disabled relative living with him whose needs should be taken into account. However for the immediate purpose we will consider the question in terms of providing a home for one elderly person or couple.

180. The main ohject in providing a house for such people must be to allow them to continue to live an independent life as long as possihle. This is the wish of the great majority of active elderly people, and it may be assumed that those who do not wish to live independently and are content to stay with relatives will not trouhle the housing department with their applications.

181. For elderly people, then, an independent existence is what they want, but for this to be a success requires much more than a two-apartment flat with a handrail beside the bath. One of the most important considerations for such people is the situation of the house in relation to familiar shops, cluhs, churches and like facilities and, above all, to friends and near relatives, particularly married sons and daughters. Even if the latter do not have their aged parents living with them, which is less common today than a generation ago, it is vitally important that they should be near enough to keep in close touch and to give help when needed.

182. To achieve tbis successfully is by no means easy, hut there are ways in which it can be made less difficult. Except in the case of a group of houses for old people under the supervision of a warden (which in any case should not be too large) it was the general view of our witnesses that houses for the elderly should not he concentrated in one area but distributed among all housing estates so that there is a balanced community of people of all ages in each area. Thus when a young couple are given a house, *it is a sound policy, when possible, to give them one in the same area as their parents. Alternatively the possibility of moving the parents when an opportunity occurs, to a suitable small house in the same area should be kept in view.*

183. The latter alternative can have two additional advantages. In the first place, it provides a good reason for persuading an elderly couple to give up a house which has become too large for them since their children have departed. As we have already mentioned in Chapter 6, this is desirable in order to make the optimum use of the available stock of housing accommodation. In the second place, a move to new surroundings in late middle age is likely to be much less disturbing to the people themselves than if it is attempted in the later years of their final retirement. They will have plenty of time before then to become well settled in the neighhourhood and to make new friends in addition to the primary advantage of being near their children.

184. Whether at this stage they actually move into a house specially equipped for old people is not important. Ideally, a large proportion of the authority's 1, 2 and 3 apartment houses should be designed so as to be convenient for old people. But if at least some such houses are available in any housing area, a further move at a later stage, perhaps from an upper flat to one on the ground floor, can easily be arranged without any of the

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upbeaval and consequent reluctance which old people experience wben asked to move to a new area away from tbe familiar environment and neighbours.

Warden supervision

185. For some elderly people a point may come wben tbey need tbe benefit of baving someone near at hand wbo can be summoned quickly in an emergency and who, by being near and keeping in toucb, can also give unobtrusive day to day belp in a way that best meets the old peoples' needs without intruding on their privacy and without making tbem more dependent on outside belp tban is necessary.

186. Sucb a service can be arranged by providing a small group of old peoples' dwellings under tbe supervision of a warden. Eacb bouse would be connected to the warden's residence by an alarm system or, preferably, hy a two-way communication system. The tenants would tben feel secure in tbe knowledge tbat if tbey needed belp it would be near at hand. It would not normally be part of the warden's duties to do any actual nursing and the need for tbe sort of assistance given by welfare staff, voluntary organisations, tbe bome nurses or the tenants' own relations, would not be affected. In order that help from outside can be summoned in any kind of emergency it is most valuable for tbe autbority to arrange for a telepbone to be installed in tbe warden's house.

187. Sometimes a communal lounge or television room for the old people can be provided in conjunction with tbe warden's own residence so that sbe can look after tbese facilities; this sort of provision is generally most welcome to the tenants.

188. It is worth mentioning tbat accommodation of this kind can often very appropriately be provided by housing associations. We would bope that local authorities would give sucb assistance and encouragement as they are ahle to projects of this kind and that their housing and welfare staff would work in close collahoration witb sucb associations.

189. To summarise, we recommend that an adequate number of small bouses, of 1, 2 or 3 apartments, sbould be provided in all bousing areas, designed so that tbey either meet or can be readily adapted to meet the special requirements of the elderly and tbe disabled. These houses sbould be allocated to middle aged people hefore tbey are in need of the special facilities so that they are enahled eventually to grow old in comfort in familiar surroundings. At the same time *special old peoples' houses under the supervision of a worden should be provided in smoll groups in as many oreas as possible so that if an eventual transfer to this type of occommodotion has to be made it may still be in the some neighbourhood.*

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CHAPTER 12

Other Aspects of Good Management

Multi-storey Housing

190. It seemed to us at the outset of our enquiries that the growing number of houses in multi-storey blocks might be a source of special management problems and we therefore included some questions about this in our questionnaire to local authorities. From the replies and from further discussions we have had in the course of our visits we are satisfied that there is a problem which may not yet have been fully appreciated.

191. We came to the conclusion that the problem is bigger than it is possible for us to cover fully. We note in the following paragraphs some points which came to our notice, but we consider that the subject is so important that it would merit a further detailed study, possibly by a fresh remit to a sub-committee of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee.

192. Briefly, there appear to be two main ways in which life in multi-storey flats differs from that in conventional low-rise housing, namely the physical differences due to the nature of the building itself, and secondly the social effects which arise from living in this type of dwelling.

Physical differences

193. There are a number of basic problems which need to be dealt with differently in a multi-storey block. Some of these have, as a result of experience, achieved fairly satisfactory solutions, but many earlier theories have been found wanting. It is specially important in planning a multi-storey development that past experience should be fully taken into account.

194. The physical problems which are the concern of management include such aspects of the basic design of the blocks as, for example, lifts, drying facilities, refuse disposal and problems arising from the construction of the buildings themselves, such as dampness due to water penetration.

195. Special ways of providing for the drying of laundry and the disposal of refuse are needed in multi-storey flats, since normal arrangements are impracticable. Communal laundry arrangements have worked successfully in some cases, but not in all. Drying is particularly difficult; to have washing hung on balconies is very unsightly and we consider that local authorities are fully justified in refusing to allow it. Various alternatives all have their advantages and disadvantages.

196. Similarly various different methods of refuse disposal have been tried. Chutes are the most common but need to be well designed so as to avoid their becoming dirty, offensive or noisy. Sometimes their use is confined to dry rubbish and waste disposal units are fitted to the sink in each flat to deal with ordinary kitchen refuse.

197. Another point which should not be forgotten is the high cost not only of building but of maintaining multi-storey blocks. For example the arrangements for external window cleaning are likely to be both complicated and costly. It has been estimated that

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the cost of maintenance and management may be as high as £40 to £50 per dwelling per annum[1] and the housing authority's maintenance budget should be prepared accordingly.

Social effects of living in high flats

198. With regard to the social problems of living in multi-storey houses we have encountered a good deal of anxiety on this point but little factual evidence. Not enough is yet known about the effects of living in this type of housing. Here too, in the same way as was discussed in Chapter 9, there seems to be a danger of creating a new and different type of slum from that which is being replaced. Multi-storey blocks are generally built because land shortage requiring new housing at a high density seems to make them the only solution, but although the houses themselves are modern, well designed and provided with up to date amenities, the desire to build the maximum possible number of houses can lead to the shortage of facilities outside the home which contributed so much in the past to the poor conditions which residents in the old type of slum property had to endure.

Children

199. By far the most serious problem is to provide adequately for the recreational needs of children living in the flats. We note that the majority of local authority multi-storey blocks comprise mainly two and three apartment flats and that they are not intended for the larger families, but it will need care to ensure that large families do not end up by occupying them for one reason or another.

200. The difficulties in providing satisfactorily for children are many. Small children under, say seven, cannot be allowed to go downstairs to play outside the building by themselves when their mothers are high up and unable either to see what they are doing or to get to them in a hurry. Older children up to about twelve will need a properly equipped playground close to the buildings; many excellent ideas for the equipment of such playgrounds have been developed in recent years[2]. Teenagers will need open spaces for organised games, and, although these need not immediately adjoin the blocks of flats, provision must be made on a scale which takes into account the number of people living in the estate.

Community facilities

201. Some form of hall where people can meet is, as we have already stressed in Chapter 9, extremely important. In multi-storey housing the need is even more acute because of the effect which living in a building of this kind has on people's relationship with their neighbours. We understand that it is surprisingly difficult to get to know other people in large buildings except perhaps those occupying the few other flats on the same floor. Apart from chance encounters in the lift there is little opportunity to meet people living on other floors. The difference in levels seems to constitute a barrier which stands in the way of, for example, a casual evening stroll, which the tenants are unlikely to take up and down the stairs.

202. We commend the practice of one local authority which we visited. When a new multi-storey block had been completed, the flats allocated and the new tenants were about to move in, the housing manager would call a meeting of all the new tenants, preferably in whatever community hall had been provided on the scheme. At this meeting the housing manager would introduce himself and various members of his staff with whom the tenants would have contact, including the caretaker. He would draw attention to all the facilities available, including location of shops, details of public transport and so on,

1 *Housing Management*, J. P. Macey and C. V. Baker, the Estates Gazette Ltd. 1965.
2 see, for example, the report *Children's Play on Housing Estates*, H.M.S.O. 1966.

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explain the working of equipment fitted in the flats (such as central heating, provision for electric cookers, drying facilities and so on) and then invite questions from the assemhled company. It was found that this practice, while not obviating the need for personal visits to help new tenants to settle in, as recommended in Chapter 10, helped greatly not only in avoiding many of the minor difficulties which arise and so helping the tenants to feel at their ease quickly, but also in hringing them all together straight away so that right from the start a few acquaintanceships would probably be struck np and a sense of community be given a chance to develop.

203. This sort of meeting could also lead to the formation of a tenants' or residents' association; we have indicated in Chapter 9 that we believe such associations, especially if given a little unobtrusive guidance to get started on the right lines, can be of great value.

Caretakers

204. The effect which a good caretaker can produce upon the lives of the people living in the flats is considerable, simply by reason of the manner in which he performs his work and his general attitude to the tenants and their children. It is therefore very important to select people for these posts with great care. A suggestion has been made that the importance of the post can be stressed by renaming it "estate superintendent" [3] and it may achieve hetter results if in a very large development one estate superintendent is appointed for a whole group of multi-storey blocks, and that he should be supported by subordinates in the form of porters or estate handymen, prohahly accommodated one to each block. A good ratio might be approximately one full-time employee to every 100 flats, although this ratio may not be practicable in all cases, and to some extent it must depend on the numher of flats in each hlock.

Conclusion

205. We would like to repeat in conclusion that we regard these comments as having only touched on the problems which can arise through the widespread growth of multi-storey flats as a form of urban housing and *we recommend that a further more detailed study based on the experience of people actually living in these flats should be undertaken as soon as possible.*

Administration of Housing Departments

206. One of the most important points to he borne in mind when considering the administrative arrangements to he adopted within a housing management department, is the need for good public relations. This is one of the detailed applications of the general topic of landlord-tenant relations. At this point we wish to draw attention particularly to the office organisation aspect and to the way members of the puhlic are received when they visit the department.

207. In this the department often suffers under a serious handicap owing to the tendency of many authorities to allocate to it the oldest and most inconvenient office accommodation, whereas being one of the departments most frequently visited by the public there are strong grounds for making it the show place of the authority. Where the authority is fortunate enough to have a modern centralised office block containing all or most of its departments, *the housing department should be placed in the most easily accessible position preferably on the ground floor, with plenty of space for people coming in and out.*

208. The next point to be considered is what happens when the visitor gets inside the office. Pressure of such visits may at times make it inevitable that he should have to wait,

[3] *Living in Flats*, report by a sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee, H.M.S.O. 1952, para. 116.

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but everything possible should be done to cut down the waiting time as much as possible. Rent collection staff should be augmented at peak periods and should be so organised as to avoid, for example, the need for each tenant to pay his rent only at one particular point so that it can happen that there is a long queue at that position while other clerks are unoccupied. Office rent collection systems were discussed in Chapter 7.

209. In larger departments it will usually be convenient to separate other visitors into tenants, possibly seeking interviews about problems connected with their tenancy, and applicants for houses. These two categories of visitors will normally be applying to different sections of the department. In both cases, however, *it is important to provide comfortable and attractive waiting accommodation with adequate seating and toilet facilities.* The visitor, and this perhaps applies particularly to applicants for houses, should not be made to feel like an inferior being, a mere suppliant for favours, regimented in rows on uncomfortable benches and doomed to a brusque and unsympathetic reception before he even achieves his interview.

Interviews

210. When his turn comes to discuss his problem with the appropriate official, the way this interview is handled is of the utmost importance. *If possible it should be conducted in a private room;* partitioned cubicles can be accepted as a substitute provided they are so designed as to give a real feeling of privacy and avoid any possibility of the conversation being overheard. On no account should the visitor be asked to state his business across a public counter to an untrained clerk or typist. Proper training in interviewing is an essential part of the training of housing staff (see Chapter 13) especially in the basic technique, which can be taught, of putting one's own ideas across and at the same time appreciating the other person's point of view. If the number of callers and arrangement of offices makes a system of signboards insufficient so that it is essential to introduce an intermediary between the visitor and the interviewer, in order to direct the visitor to the right person to deal with his problem, then *this should be a trained and sympathetic receptionist who can talk briefly but privately to each person in order to identify the nature of his problem.*

Cost of Management

211. Both the authority and their officials need always to have in mind the fact that the service they provide must be as economical as possible, consistent with the essential requirement of providing a good service.

212. Authorities should not rest content without knowing exactly what their management service is costing them. We attempted to obtain some idea of the amounts involved by including a question on this in our questionnaire to local authorities. It was clear, however, that the wide variety in the subjects dealt with by housing departments, and the even greater variety in the way different items were charged against the housing management account, made it impossible to obtain fully comparable figures. We note that up to 1965 the Scottish Branch of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants published in their annual Rating Review figures for the cost of management in each authority, but with a note stressing the unreliability of the figure for purposes of comparison.

213. We consider this a most unsatisfactory situation and *recommend that a uniform method should be adopted for accounting for management costs so that a comparison can be made between one authority and another.* We note that a detailed study of this matter has been made in England by a working party appointed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. We ourselves did not feel competent to comment on that report[4],

[4] *Report of Working Party on the Costing of Management and Maintenance of Local Authority Housing*, H.M.S.O. 1964.

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but we recommend that it should be examined in co-operation with the Scottish Branch of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants in order to discover how far its recommendations would be applicable in Scotland and if necessary to devise a system which could be recommended to Scottish local authorities.

Commission on Rates

214. On the subject of costs, there is one other matter to which we draw attention. When quoting any figure for the cost of management, most authorities include in it a sum representing general administrative costs apportioned to the housing department. On the other hand some, but not all, also make a deduction in respect of commission on rates on council houses which are collected by the housing department along with the rents and are then transferred in total to the finance department.

215. When an authority elect to levy rates on a landlord in the circumstances in which section 240 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1947 applies[5], they are then obliged to allow him a commission of from 2½ per cent to 5 per cent of the rates collected. We are advised that since departments of a local authority are not in themselves legal entities this provision could not bind one department to grant commission to another. *We consider however, that an appropriate credit should be allowed to the housing management account* since, if the housing department did not perform this function, its own costs might be less and the costs of rate collection by the finance department would certainly be higher. It may not necessarily be appropriate for the credit to be calculated in the same way as the commission allowed to a private landlord. In the report referred to in paragraph 213 it is recommended that such a credit should be based on 1¼ per cent of the gross rateable value of the property concerned.

Annual Reports

216. The housing departments of some local authorities publish annual reports describing in detail the work of the department during the year. We consider that such reports, particularly if attractively presented with photographs and progress diagrams, can serve a useful purpose in two ways. They bring before the council the work of the department and serve to remind members of its scale and importance, and they also act as a stimulus to the department itself to be constantly reviewing its own standards and results and ensuring that a high level of efficiency is maintained. *We therefore commend the practice for consideration by others.*

5 i.e., where a landlord of property let for periods of less than one year is required to collect the rates from his tenants on behalf of the authority.

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CHAPTER 13

Training and Qualifications of Housing Staff

Need for Qualified Staff

217. In the preceding chapters we have expressed views about ways in which efficient housing management might he achieved hy local authorities. *Above all, it is clear that their successful implementation will depend on the employment of adequate numbers of qualified staff.* There is little doubt that through past neglect, staff with the appropriate qualities are not availahle at present in the numbers required. We must therefore consider what arrangements can be made to ensure that a sufficient supply of properly trained and qualified officials will be availahle in the future to undertake effectively the increased responsihilities arising from the ever increasing public investment in housing.

218. The value of professional qualifications in ensuring the maintenance of a high and uniform standard of ability and professional competence is generally accepted in a wide variety of occupations. There is no reason why the attitude of the authority towards the qualifications required for housing staff should be any different from that adopted towards other departments for which professional qualifications are expected, such as health, architecture or finance. In the field of housing management the qualification considered most suitahle for housing staff employed by local authorities is the Diploma in Housing Management of the Institute of Housing Managers, which is the only professional organisation in Great Britain concerned exclusively with the good management of public authority housing. A statement of the Institute's principal ohjects is at Appendix E and details of the training requirements of the Institute and the examinations for the diploma are set out in Appendix F.

219. It is possihle to ohtain professional qualifications in other ways; the examinations of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors can he taken with urban estate management as a main suhject and a Degree of B.Sc. (Estate Management) is awarded hy London University. Both these qualifications are accepted for membership of the Institute of Housing Managers.

220. Like other departments of the local authority, the housing department will employ a numher of memhers of staff in clerical and other suhordinate capacities. *But it is important that the officer in charge of the department should be professionally qualified and should be supported, according to its size, by a number of officials who are similarly qualified in housing management or are training to become so qualified.* As a rough guide we suggest that an adequate staff structure might be built up around one qualified manager to every 2,000 houses. Allowing for small authorities owning fewer houses, this figure would imply that some 300 qualified managers would be needed in Scottish local authority services. By contrast, the actual position is that there are not more than about fifty trained and qualified housing managers employed in Scotland today.

221. Clearly, the proper training of future staff is in the need of most urgent attention and the first essential is to attract a greater number of capable young men and young women to enter the profession. If it is to seem to them to offer a worthwhile and attractive

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career, possession of the appropriate qualifications must be made a prerequisite for holding the senior posts. Similarly a proper inducement for people of ability to remain in the profession must be provided by according to the senior posts the status and salary level commensurate with their importance.

222. In order to achieve this, adequate opportunities for training must be provided and *it must be a requirement that junior staff of certain grades, if they hope for advancement, must study for the examinations of the Institute.*

Forms of training

223. We have been impressed by the much more serious manner in which the question of training is approached by many English local authorities than is the common practice in Scotland. In England, many of the larger authorities accept housing trainees into a number of posts which are treated as surplus to normal establishment. As well as making special arrangements to give these trainees practical experience in each of the various branches of the department, and giving them special guidance and practice at such important but non-academic matters as interviewing, they are required to attend day-release classes leading directly to the examinations of the Institute and are also encouraged to attend evening classes or take correspondence courses. The local authorities frequently give assistance towards the fees for these courses and the cost of books.

224. Unfortunately, although in-service training is provided by some authorities in Scotland, there are at present no tutorial facilities available for either day or evening classes specially directed to the examinations of the Institute of Housing Managers.

225. In England such facilities are widely available in further education colleges and we have no reason to suppose that they could not be provided in Scotland if the education authorities were satisfied that there was sufficient demand for courses of this kind.

226. These courses are particularly suitable for trainees near the start of their careers in local authority housing departments. There are, however, in addition large numbers of existing staff who have already obtained some experience and seniority but who have never had the benefit of formal training. Some officers in this category have obtained the qualifications of the Institute of Housing Managers by their own efforts, but many others, in the absence of special encouragement, have not done so. It would be of great benefit to the general standard of housing management if training directed to this middle grade category of official could also be made available.

227. We have also been much interested in a block-release course in housing management at the Catford College of Commerce in London. This consists of blocks of five weeks full-time study at the College interspersed by in-service training in the housing department. There would be four such periods spread over two years leading to the intermediate examination of the Institute. and then a further four periods spread over a further two years and leading to the final examination of the Institute. Another interesting scheme is a full-time course of eight months at the Hertfordshire College of Building leading to the Intermediate examination of the Institute.

228. Training courses such as these are intended mainly for the comparatively junior officer but at Catford in special circumstances, older students recommended by their employers can also be accepted. In both cases the nominating authorities are expected to pay full salaries to their students during training.

229. Glasgow would be the obvious centre where a start in running such courses could be made, since with the City housing department plus those of the burghs and counties within easy travelling distance, the total number of potential students would be very large. The number of staff of the housing departments of these authorities who at present hold professional qualifications is very small and it is most desirable that the numbers should be increased as rapidly as possible.

230. For this to be achieved it is necessary for the local authorities to take a much more

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positive attitude to qualifications than many of them have done in the past, and also for a definite request to be made to the appropriate education authority for special courses to be organised for day-release students. Glasgow Corporation would be in the best position, both as the largest employer of potential students, and as education authority, to initiate action in this matter, but it would be necessary for other housing authorities within reach to support the project. *We recommend that discussions should be held between these authorities to establish the extent of the immediate demand and that thereafter the possibility of arranging for courses of this kind to be held should be carefully investigated.*

231. Further education colleges are not to be blamed if they do not provide courses for which there is no clear demand. It is for the housing authorities to make known that there is a demand; if they do so, we have no doubt that the necessary facilities will come into being. The syllabus of the examinations of the Institute of Housing Managers is available and we feel sure that the Institute would be ready and willing to give further advice on any aspect of training directed towards these examinations.

Conclusion

232. We conclude this Chapter with a comment on the status and title of the officer in charge of the housing department. We have already said that he should be a Chief Officer. *Within the hierarchy of Chief Officers, his status should be such as to give proper recognition of his weight of responsibility; for example, in most instances we would expect him to have at least equal status with the engineer and the architect.*

233. With regard to the title of the post, many Scottish local authorities still make use of the old term "factor" and though this has a long tradition behind it and is highly respected in many places, we believe that it also to some extent carries a connotation of the man who collects the rent and evicts those who fail to pay. Taking into account the wider sphere of duties and responsibilities which we believe should be carried out by the Chief Officer *we suggest that the title "Housing Manager" is a more appropriate one.* This title is the one now preferred by the Institute of Housing Managers.

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CHAPTER 14

Summary of Report

1. Scottish local authorities have generally failed to accord to management the importance and priority among their affairs which, in our opinion, it requires if a satisfactory service is to be provided. (Para. 8)

2. All local authorities should consider afresh the form of this management organisation. (Paras. 14 and 31)

3. All local authorities should be asked to submit details of their management systems for consideration by the Secretary of State. (Para. 15)

4. The former post of Adviser in Housing Management to the Secretary of State should be re-established within the Scottish Development Department. (Para. 16)

5. The so-called economies of a "functional" system are considered to be more apparent than real. All local authorities would benefit from a change to a centralised system. (Para. 26)

6. The most effective form of organisation for carrying out housing management functions is a centralised department under the control of a suitably qualified Chief Officer. (Para. 33)

7. Organisation and methods studies carried out on housing departments of local authorities should consider first the service to be provided rather than concentrate only on ways of effecting economies. (Para. 37)

8. As a general rule, a separate centralised housing department should be an economic proposition when the local authority owns more than about 1,000 houses. (Para. 38)

9. Small local authorities which do not own enough houses to justify the establishment of a separate housing department should model their management arrangements as closely as practicable on the same principles. (Para. 39)

10. The possible need to form a single department responsible also for the house construction programme should be kept in view for the future. (Para. 42)

11. Delegation to district offices should be considered when there are more than 20,000 houses owned by the authority. (Para. 44)

12. If large regional authorities are set up and if these authorities are given housing powers, then these powers should include management as well as the construction of houses. (Para. 47)

13. The housing manager should be a member of the team of senior officers responsible for planning and implementing new housing schemes and should remain in continuous close consultation with the architect, engineer and others concerned. (Para. 50)

14. The allocation of houses in accordance with the authority's approved policy should be delegated to the housing manager. (Para. 55)

15. Allocation schemes should be published and made available to all applicants. (Para. 55)

16. Rural areas as well as towns would benefit from a standard and publicly understood letting policy. (Para. 56)

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17. To assess his needs properly every applicant should be visited in his present home before a new house is allocated to him. (Para. 58)

18. Subsequent moves to meet a genuine need should be sympathetically considered whenever possible. (Para. 64)

19. Exchanges should be encouraged both within and without the area of the local authority; the Central Exchange Bureau should be allowed wider scope and flexibility in arranging exchanges. (Para. 67)

20. Lists of people seeking exchanges should be displayed publicly. (Para. 67)

21. Collection of rent should be the responsibility of the housing department and not of the finance department. (Para. 78)

22. Where part-time district office collection is practised, local authorities should consider the possible advantages of converting these offices into full-time District Housing Offices with delegated functions for all management matters. (Para. 80)

23. Changes to less frequent collections and to office collection rather than door-to-door, should only be made with great caution. (Para. 82)

24. Door-to-door rent collectors should be responsible for arrears in their own area of collection. (Para. 83)

25. The system of allowing "free" weeks or fortnights when normal rent is not collected is recommended to any local authorities not already practising it. (Para. 87)

26. Arrangements for collecting gas and electricity bills together with the rent may be of advantage in avoiding a situation which can lead to the accumulation of arrears. (Para. 88)

27. The use of computers for rent accounting may prove advantageous and should be considered in appropriate cases. (Para. 92)

28. The housing department should either include the repairs organisation or should at least be in a position to order repairs to be carried out, see that they have been done and be financially responsible for the cost. (Para. 99)

29. The housing department should keep records of repairs required to various forms of house construction so as to be in a position to advise on future methods of construction to he adopted. (Para. 116)

30. Older houses which do not reach currently accepted standards should be modernised and the housing department should draw up a programme for this work; this recommendation covers both pre-war council houses and other property which the authority may have acquired. (Para. 119)

31. If improvement work on a large scale is to he carried out extra Government financial assistance will be required. (Para. 122)

32. Improvement grants should be extended to cover replacement of obsolete equipment in older council and private houses. (Para. 122)

33. A further investigation should be carried out into the problem of rehabilitating some older Council estates which are rapidly degenerating into "new slums". (Para. 128)

34. Local authorities should enforce strictly the condition in the tenancy agreement which requires tenants to keep their gardens tidy. (Para. 129)

35. The housing department should take all possible steps to restore and preserve external cleanliness of estates. (Para. 135)

36. It is important to provide some community facilities at the same time as new houses are built and if necessary housing authorities should not hesitate to use their own powers for this purpose. (Para. 137)

37. The possibility of making greater use of school facilities outside school hours should be considered as a matter of urgency. (Para. 139)

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38. Housing authorities should give encouragement to the formation of residents' associations on proper lines. (Para. 142)

39. Housing authorities must be prepared to spend more money in order to provide adequate supervision and housing welfare services. (Para. 145)

40. All tenants rehoused should be visited after as well as before they move so that settling in problems can be discussed and advice given. (Para. 152)

41. Arrangements should be made for a representative of the Electricity or Gas Board as appropriate, to visit new tenants and explain the working of new types of appliances. (Para. 152)

42. Housing authorities should consider contributing to the cost of removal in appropriate cases. (Para. 153)

43. Where a new housing scheme is first occupied, the authority should consider the advisability of collecting rent by door-to-door methods for an initial period. (Para. 156)

44. Housing authorities should make sure that they have a pool of older houses suitable for tenants who cannot settle easily into new housing estates. (Para. 165)

45. The Paisley Scheme of supervised housing should be given careful consideration by other authorities confronted with the same problem. (Para. 174)

46. Elderly people should be housed as far as possible near to their married sons and daughters. (Para. 182)

47. An adequate supply of small houses should be provided in all housing areas. (Para. 189)

48. A limited amount of special old people's housing under Warden supervision should also be available in different areas. (Para. 189)

49. A detailed study of the problems of living in multi-storey flats should be carried out. (Para. 205)

50. The housing department should be given good and easily accessible office accommodation. (Para. 207)

51. Office arrangements should be organised so as to cut down as far as possible on the time visitors have to wait. (Para. 208)

52. Pleasant waiting accommodation should be provided. (Para. 209)

53. Interviews should be conducted in private. (Para. 210)

54. If a preliminary interview is necessary this should be conducted by a trained and sympathetic receptionist able to enquire privately the nature of the visitor's business. (Para. 210)

55. Management costs should be accounted for on a uniform basis to make comparison between local authorities possible. (Para. 213)

56. The report of the English working party on the costing of management and maintenance of local authority housing should be considered in consultation with the Scottish Branch of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, in order to make recommendations applicable to Scotland. (Para. 213)

57. Commission on rates collected by the housing department along with rents should be credited to the housing management account. (Para. 215)

58. The preparation of regular annual reports on the work of housing departments is a useful practice. (Para. 216)

59. To implement the recommendations in this report, more trained and qualified staff must be employed. (Para. 217)

60. The officer in charge of the housing department and an appropriate number of his supporting staff should hold professional qualifications in housing management. (Para. 220)

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61. Junior housing staff must be required to obtain professional qualifications if they hope for promotion to senior posts. (Para. 222)

62. Local authorities in the Glasgow area should co-ordinate training requirements and approach the appropriate education authorities in order to arrange for special Courses to be run leading directly to the examinations of the Institute of Housing Managers. (Para. 230)

63. The head of the housing department should be a Chief Officer of senior status. (Para. 232)

64. The title "Housing Manager" is the most appropriate in present circumstances. (Para. 233)

Tailpiece

This Prayer for landlords was in a Boke of Private Prayer published in 1553 "set fourth by the Kinges majestie, to be taughte, learned, redde and used of al hys lovynge subjects":—

We heartily pray Thee to send Thy Holy Spirit into
the hearts of them that possess
the grounds and pastures of the earth,
that they,
remembering themselves to by Thy tenants,
may not rack out or stretch out the rents of their
houses or lands,
nor yet take unreasonable fines or moneys,
after the manner of covetous worldlings,
to live and assist their families and remember the
poor,
and that landlords may so behave themselves
that after this life they may be received
into everlasting dwelling places."

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Appendix A

Authorities and Organisations giving Evidence

CITIES

Aberdeen
Dundee
Edinburgh
Glasgow

COUNTIES

Aberdeen
Angus
Argyll
Ayr
Banff
Bute
Berwick
Caithness
Clackmannan
Dumfries
Dunbarton
East Lothian
Fife
Inverness
Kincardine
Kirkcudbright
Lanark
Midlothian
Moray
Nairn
Peebles
Perth
Kinross
Renfrew
Ross & Cromarty
Roxburgh
Selkirk
Stirling
Sutherland
West Lothian
Wigtown
Zetland

BURGHS

Airdrie
Alloa
Arbroath
Ayr
Barrhead
Bathgate
Bearsden
Bo'ness
Buckhaven & Methil
Buckie
Clydebank
Coatbridge
Cowdenbeath
Dumbarton
Dumfries
Dunfermline
Dunoon
Elgin
Falkirk
Forfar
Fraserburgh
Galashiels
Gourock
Grangemouth
Greenock
Hamilton
Hawick
Helensburgh
Inverness
Irvine
Johnstone
Kilmarnock
Kirkcaldy
Kirkintilloch
Montrose
Motherwell & Wishaw
Musselburgh
Paisley
Perth
Peterhead
Port Glasgow
Prestwick
Renfrew
Rothesay
Rutherglen
Saltcoats
St. Andrews
Stirling
Troon

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

East Kilbride
Cumbernauld
Glenrothes

PROFESSIONAL AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

Scottish Special Housing Association
Scottish Welfare Officers Association
Ministry of Social Security
Messrs. Robert Rogerson & Philip Spence, Architects
Society of Town Clerks of Scotland
The Scottish Branch of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Castlemilk Christian Action Group
Family Service Units, Glasgow Unit
Scottish Council of Social Service
Institute of Housing Managers — Scottish Branch
The Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants — Scottish Branch
Hanover Housing Association

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VISITS AND ORAL EVIDENCE

Ayr County Council
Ayr Town Council
Paisley Town Council
Lanarkshire County Council
Corporation of The City of Glasgow
Corporation of The City of Edinburgh
Harlow Development Corporation
Corporation of The City and County of Newcastle upon Tyne
Corporation of The City and County of Bristol
Corporation of the Rotherham County Borough
Rotherham Rural District Council
East Kilbride Development Corporation
Scottish Special Housing Association
Institute of Housing Managers — Scottish Branch
Scottish Council of Social Service
Scottish Welfare Officers Association
Castlemilk Christian Action Group
Family Service Units, Glasgow Unit

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Appendix B

Principal Published Material on Housing Management

"Housing Management"	by John P. Macey and Charles Vivian Baker, The Estates Gazette Ltd. 1965
"Housing Management"	Edited for the Society of Housing Managers by Rosemary J. Rowles, Pitman 1959
"Housing and Local Government in England and Wales"	by J. B. Cullingworth, Allen & Unwin 1966
"Allocation of Council Houses"	by R. D. Cramond, Oliver & Boyd 1964
"Housing Management"	The Society of Housing Managers 1955
"Living in Flats"	H.M.S.O. 1952
"Unsatisfactory Tenants"	H.M.S.O. 1955
"Moving from the Slums"	H.M.S.O. 1956
"Councils and their Houses"	H.M.S.O. 1959
"Report of Working Party on the Costing of Management and Maintenance of Local Authority Housing"	H.M.S.O. 1964
"Children's Play on Housing Estates"	H.M.S.O. 1966
"Old People's Welfare in Scotland"	Scottish Council of Social Service, Pergamon Press 1965
"The Elderly: Priorities"	Scottish Council of Social Service, The Tweedale Press Ltd., 1966
"Wardens and Old People's Dwellings"	The National Old People's Welfare Council Blackfriars Press Ltd., 1966
"Housing Management"	by Malcolm A. Smith, F.I.Hsg. (extract from the proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Scottish Conference of the Institute of Housing Scottish Branch 1960)
"Public Owership and Bureaucracy"	by John Fleming, F.R.I.C.S., F.I.H.M., M.R.S.H.
"The Place for Welfare in Housing"	by Sir John Wrigley, K.B.E., C.B.
"Lettings: Policy and Practice"	by L. Rowley, F.I.H.M., F.R.S.H. (Extracts from The 1966 Annual Conference Report of the Institute of Housing Managers).
"Housing Problems of Older Persons — The Management Point of View"	by Malcolm A. Smith, M.B.E., F.I.H.M., A.R.S.H.
"Housing for the Old People — Medical Aspects"	by Dr Bernard Isaacs, M.D., F.R.C.P. (Extracts from Programme of Proceedings of the First Annual Scottish Conference of the Institute of Housing Managers Scottish Branch, 1966).

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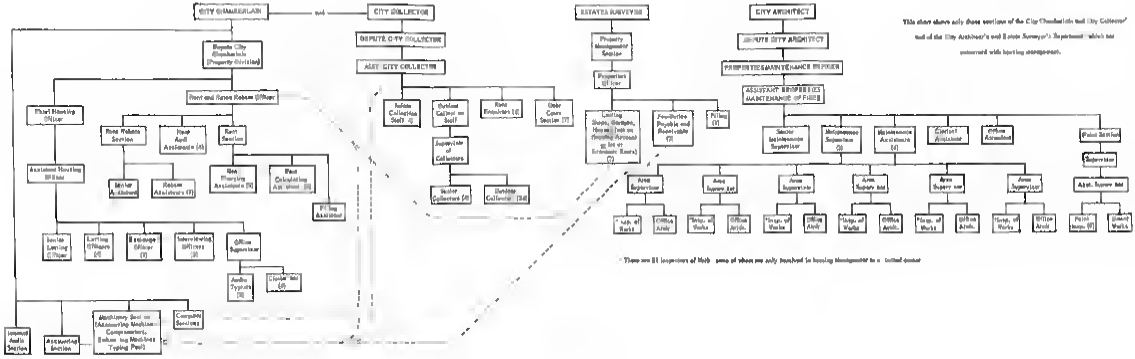
Appendix C

(a) A Functional system of housing management in a large Authority owning 46,000 houses


CITY CHAMBERLAIN
and
CITY COLLECTOR
DEPUTY CITY COLLECTOR
ASST. CITY COLLECTION
Deputy City Chamberlain (Property Division)
Rent and Rates Rebate Officer
Chief Housing Officer
Rate Rebate Section
Rent Audit Assistants (4)
Rent Section
Assistant Housing Officer
Rent Collecting Assistants (10)
Rent Clerks (6)
Rent Collecting Assistants (10)
Rebate Assistants (7)
Rent Clerks (6)
Rent Collecting Assistants (10)
Rent Clerks (6)
Rent Collecting Assistants (10)
Rent Clerks (6)
Rent Collecting Assistants (10

Appendix D

The Difficult Tenant — Method of Supervision and Training adopted by Paisley Town Council

In Paisley, tenants of local authority houses who require supervision are dealt with as follows, viz:—

(a) A lady inspectress reports on the sanitary standard of the house to the Sanitary Inspector, who submits his report to the Burgh Factor and Supervisory Committee. If the committee are satisfied, that no other remedy is possible they instruct the name to be placed on the Burgh Factor's list for supervision.

(b) The tenant is informed that his name has been placed on the list and advised to make every effort to improve the condition of his house.

(c) Failing an improvement within a reasonable time his let is terminated but he is given the option of removing to a supervised house.

(d) If he agrees to accept supervision he is again written and told that he has been given the opportunity of a fresh start and that he will be transferred out, if reports are favourable, but if unfavourable may be ejected altogether.

(e) When the Supervisor's reports regarding him have been consistently good, he is given a transfer-out under periodic visitation. He is notified that this will cease if he maintains the required standard of cleanliness.

The Duties of the Supervisor are as follows:—

(a) The Supervisor is under the control of the Burgh Factor.

(b) A daily inspection is made of the houses, stairs, closes and gardens in the area.

(c) By advice and admonition an endeavour is made to persuade the tenants to keep their houses, stairs and closes clean, their gardens cultivated and the children cared for. The ideal is to help the tenants and their children to become good citizens.

(d) A separate report is kept for each household and a report submitted on all households to the Burgh Factor at the end of each month. A copy of a report form is appended.

(e) Any wilful damage done by the tenants or their children is reported to the Burgh Factor.

(f) All repairs which come to the notice of the Supervisor are reported to the Burgh Factor.

(g) Rents are collected weekly and a return submitted to the Burgh Factor.

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MONTHLY REPORT FORM FOR SUPERVISED DWELLINGS:

Supervisor's Report for month ended

Name Address

Inmates (M) Total Apts.

(F)

	Condition of Livingroom	Condition of Bedroom	Actual Total	Possible Total
Ventilation				10
Ceilings				10
Walls				10
Floors				10
Beds and Bedding				10
Furniture				10
Vermin				10
Lavatory				10
Stairs or Close				10
Back Court				10

Payment of Rent.....

Behaviour of Children.....

Remarks .....

.....

Date..... .....Supervisor

Mothercraft and Homecraft Centre

The Town Council, reviewing the scheme of supervision in 1965, decided that the limited service which was being provided within the supervised area required to be expanded to include facilities of mothercraft and homecraft training.

A 4-apartment house formerly occupied by the Supervisor was made available, one room being used as an administrative centre, and the rest of the house furnished and utilised for training.

Two House Mothers are employed and give instruction in matters such as general housework, laundering, budgeting, shopping, basic cookery and baking, compiling simple menus, knitting and sewing, personal and family hygiene, and infant and child hygiene.

The House Mother extends her contact with the families into their own homes with the idea that the instruction received by the mother in the Training Centre is reflected in an improved standard of housekeeping in the tenant's own residence.

Obviously, matters such as hire purchase debt, alcoholism, mental retardation etc., will require to be given attention from time to time and it is by co-ordination between the various Departments of the Local Authority that the appropriate services are brought into action.

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Appendix E

The Institute of Housing Managers — Aims and Objects

The Institute is now the only professional body in Great Britain exclusively concerned with the good management of housing property owned mainly by public and local authorities and also by housing associations. The membership of approximately 2,500, constantly growing in numbers, is mainly connected with housing management in Great Britain, although a sprinkling of members exist in Eire and the Far East.

The principal objects are:

(i) The promotion of the science and art of housing management, its standards and ideals, and the education and training of housing managers in their profession. By the latter is meant the management of house property provided primarily as a service to the community or some part of it, but not necessarily excluding property owned for profit hy government departments, local or other public authorities, housing associations, charities, companies or individuals. Also included in the foregoing are ancillary properties on, or in connection with housing estates. Housing management also comprises the rendering of advice on the extent, nature and location of housing need and accommodation in particular areas and on the management aspects of design and layout.

(ii) The provision of a central organisation for those engaged in the profession of housing management and the promotion of the profession in its various branches; the extension of the management of housing estates and property by properly trained and qualified housing managers; generally, the improvement of housing in all its aspects.

(iii) The provision of opportunities for the acquisition and dissemination of technical information within the profession: particularly the provision of a library service, the arranging of lectures, meetings, conferences and discussions, the organisation of study tours, the interchange of information and opinion: the encouragement and endowment of research and the issue of publications.

(iv) The selection, training, and testing of persons by examination, the granting of certificates and diplomas and the award of prizes, scholarships and bursaries.

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Appendix F

Training of Housing Staff

The Diploma in Housing Management

Examinations for the Diploma in Housing Management, which qualifies the holder for election to Associate Membership of the Institute of Housing Managers, are held annually in May. They are in two parts, Intermediate and Final.

The subjects covered by the syllabus are as follows:

Intermediate

1. Construction and Maintenance of Buildings(I)
2. Central and Local Government.
3. Estate Records and Accounts.
4. Elements of English Law
5. Law of Housing and Public Health.
6. Principles of Administration.
7. Sanitation and Services.

Final

8. Construction and Maintenance of Buildings(II)
9. Housing Finance.
10. Law of Landlord and Tenant.
11. Law of Housing and Planning.
12. Social Welfare.
13. Housing Management and Administration(I).
14. Housing Management and Administration (II).

Trainees

In accordance with the Diploma Rules a trainee must be employed in approved housing management duties and be a Registered Student of the Institute for at least sixteen months prior to sitting the Intermediate Examination.

Graduates wishing to qualify in the shortest possible time and obtaining a trainee appointment immediately upon leaving university (and not later than 31st July) may sit for the Intermediate examination the following May — ten months later.

Candidates successful in the Intermediate examination may sit the Final in the following year or any subsequent year.

Suggested Training Programme

In view of the varying lengths of training period, it is not proposed to suggest precisely how long should be spent by trainees in each aspect of housing management training but to suggest a general arrangement for adaptation to individual circumstances.

Suggested Timing: Up to Intermediate stage (2 years)

(a) Day to day experience of dealing with incoming messages; letters; telephone; correspondence; filing.

(b) Experience of lettings:

listening-in to office interviews with applicants; accompanying experienced officers on home visits to applicants; (as soon as trainee shows aptitude he should be given opportunity to conduct interviews and visits unaccompanied). Grounding in the administration of the waiting list, filing system for applications, points scheme, selection for committee, and allocations.
Transfers and exchanges

(c) Experience of general management duties including: rent collection and weekly rent accounts; ordering and checking of repairs; enforcement of tenancy regulations; liaison with other organisations in connection with tenants' welfare.

To be gained if possible in the course of normal regular estate visits, the trainee to be made responsible, under supervision, for an appropriate number of tenancies.

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(d) Insight of and experience in the following, if available in the authority:
Rent rebates, differential rent schemes.
Caretaking of estates.
Tenants' associations and community activities.
Slum clearance and rehousing.

BETWEEN INTERMEDIATE AND FINAL STAGES (1–2 years)

The trainee should be given time to absorb the detailed work connected with the following aspects of housing management and administration. During the same period and especially in the last six months he will be carrying out housing duties with increasing responsibility.

Housing Finance and Accounts:	Capital and revenue estimates; housing revenue accounts and repairs funds; rent fixing; costing bonus schemes.
Maintenance and repairs:	Programmed redecorations; improvements and modernisation; inspections of empty properties and building sites; estimates; inspection of building materials and visits to depots.
Layout and design:	Plan reading; attendance at design and layout discussions. Estate amenities, landscaping.
Management and Administration:	Office organisation and internal communications; committee work; housing policy; assessment of housing need; implementation of legislation. Estate management and the relation between landlord and tenant in the broadest sense.

In the first three of the above, the goodwill and co-operation of other Chief Officers will often be required. Housing Managers may also be asked to take trainees from other departments where professional studies overlap. Obviously nothing but good can come from the senior officers of the future having a comprehensive knowledge of the work of all interrelated departments.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

(a) Minimum educational standard required for admission as a Registered Student of the Institute and for acceptance as a candidate for the Diploma examinations: the following passes in G.C.E. 'O' level or in certain equivalent examinations — English Language; Mathematics or an approved science subject; two other subjects from an approved list.
(b) Age Limits. No fixed age limits; candidates for the Intermediate examination must be 18 years.
(c) Salary. The salary offered to trainees should commence on the appropriate figure in General Division and progress to A.P.T.I. II.
(d) Examinations. Trainees should be required to study for and take the Intermediate and Final examinations for the Diploma in Housing Management.
(e) Supplementary course of training. General facilities and financial assistance should be given in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Scheme of Salaries and Conditions of Service for Administrative, etc. Staff[1] including leave of absence to attend approved day time courses or if these are not available, for equivalent free time for study by correspondence courses.

Further particulars and detailed examination syllabus may be obtained from the Secretary, The Institute of Housing Managers, Victoria House, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1, or from the Secretary, The Institute of Housing Managers (Scottish Branch), Abbey Gardens, 9 St. Margaret Street, Dunfermline.

1 As laid down by the National Joint Industrial Councils for Local Authority Services (Scotland), obtainable from the District Organisation Officer, N.A.L.G.O., 420 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, C.2.

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(reproduced by courtesy of Paisley Town Council)

Not all tenants can be expected to produce gardens like this prize-winning example but encouragement and organised competition can quickly raise the general standard.

Dilapidated fences and untended front gardens can soon discourage a whole neighbourhood from making the effort necessary if this amenity is to be preserved.

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Neglect soon reduces the area behind houses, even recent developments, to a sordid wilderness.

Good use made of the area at the back of new houses.

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It is all too easy for housing areas of poor amenity to deteriorate in social character so that it becomes necessary for o temporarily vocant ground floor house to have the windows boarded up as o protection against vandalism.

It is important that comfortable seoting should be provided for people woiting for interviews ot the housing deportment.

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